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THE NEW YORKER

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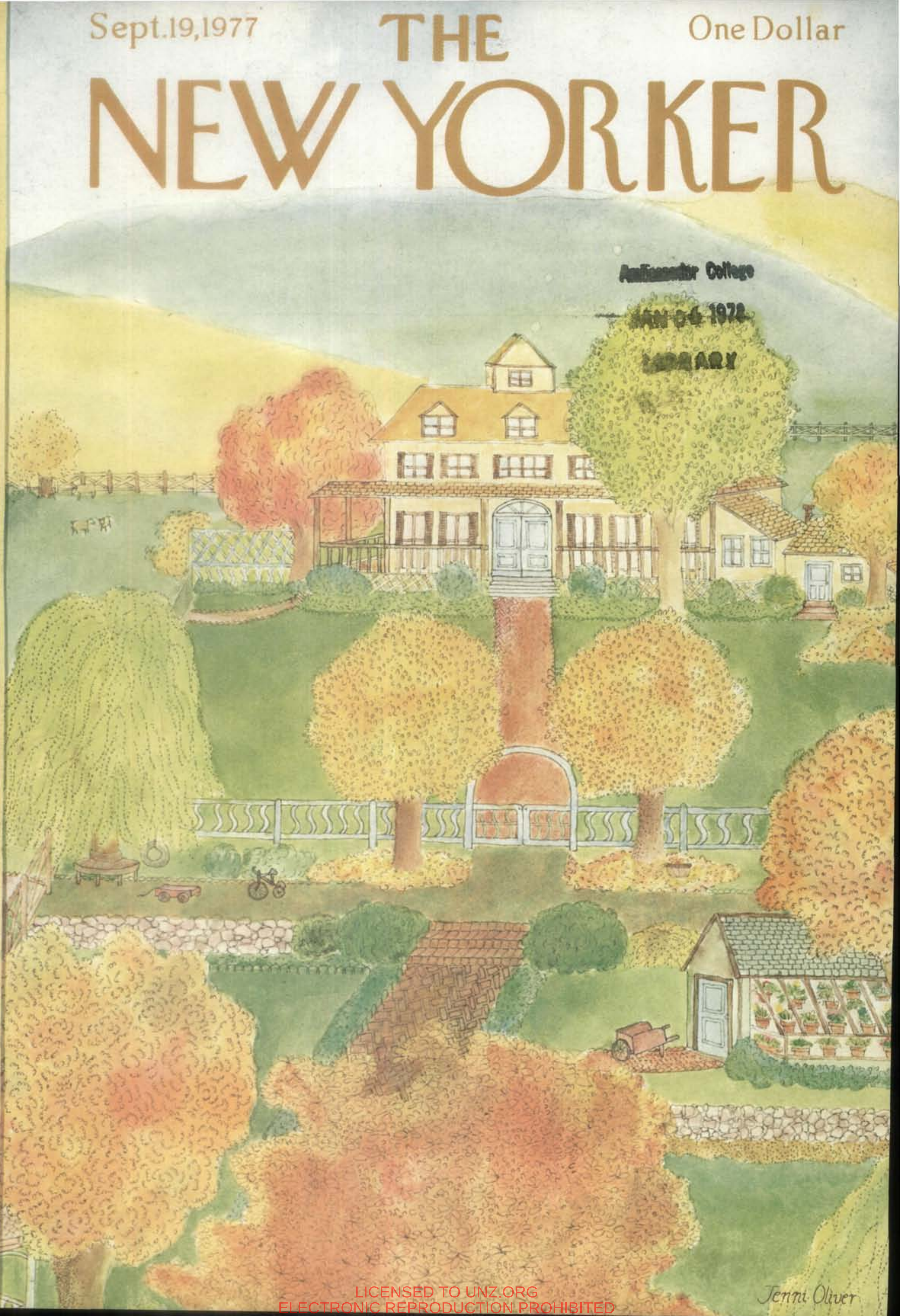
Jenni Oliver

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birdie on the 18th,
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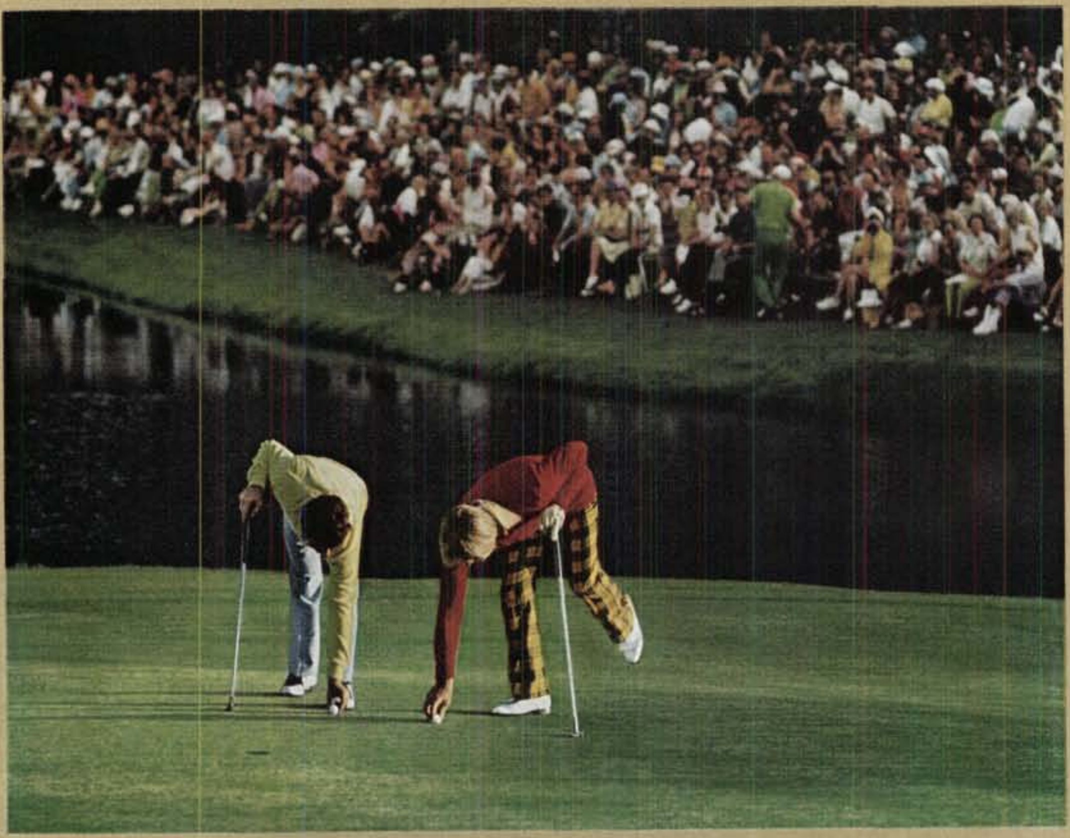

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

A CONSCIENTIOUS CALENDAR OF EVENTS OF INTEREST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24

THE THEATRE

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

Annie—A long musical based on the celebrated comic-strip characters Little Orphan Annie and Daddy Warbucks, both altered for the purposes of an amusing book by Thomas Meehan. Dorothy Loudon is marvellous as an alcoholic scold. (Alvin, 250 W. 52nd St. 757-8646. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Counsellor at Law—This literal, earthbound production doesn't do much for Elmer Rice's forty-six-year-old melodrama about a self-made Jewish lawyer, exposing its hokum and often failing to register its valid points—its details of business and dialogue—of which there are more than you might expect. There are interesting performances, though, by Robert Nersesian and John Neary, as the lawyer's clerk and partner, respectively; and George Guidall and Claudine Catania are sincere in the leading roles. (Quaigh, Hotel Diplomat, 108 W. 43rd St. 221-9088. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

Gemini—In Albert Innaurato's very funny comedy, a Harvard undergraduate, son of an Italian-American laborer, is paid a surprise visit by a pair of his classmates—a well-to-do brother and sister from Cambridge—and is thrown into a panic that at first appears to be social, but is actually sexual. With Danny Aiello as the father and Anne DeSalvo, Jonathan Hadary, and Robert Picardo, among other good actors. Peter Mark Schifter directed. (Little Theatre, 240 W. 44th St. 221-6425. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Grand Kabuki—A company of more than sixty male actors, dancers, and musicians from Tokyo in the final performances of an eleven-day engagement of **YOSHITSUNE SENBON ZAKURA** and **KUROZUKA**. Simultaneous-translation sets are available. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 874-1717. Wednesday, Sept. 14, and Saturday, Sept. 17, at 2 and 7:30; Thursday and Friday, Sept. 15-16, at 7:30; and Sunday, Sept. 18, at 2.)

I Love My Wife—A musical that achieves an unconvincing raunchiness. Some singable songs by Cy Coleman and Michael Stewart, and an admirable cast, but nothing much can be done with Mr. Stewart's tasteless book. Gene Saks is the brave director. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 246-0390. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

The King and I—An irresistibly tuneful Rodgers and Hammerstein show, all the more pleasing for being somewhat old-fashioned. Yul Brynner is its superb star. (Uris, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Man of La Mancha—A revival of the Wasserman-Leigh-Darion musical, with Richard Kiley, Emily Yancy, Robert Wright, and Tony Martinez. Directed by Albert Marre. Chev Rodgers will substitute for Mr. Kiley at the Wednesday matinée performances. Previews Wednesday, Sept. 14. Opens officially on Thursday, Sept. 15, and will run through Saturday, Dec. 3. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 757-2626. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8; opening-night curtain at 7. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Mummenschanz—A merry evening of pantomime with three masked players—Andrés Bossard and Bernie Schürch, from Switzerland, and Floriana Frassetto, from Italy. The masks are ingenious and surprising, and so are the ideas of this nimble troupe. (Bijou, 209 W. 45th St. 221-8500. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Otherwise Engaged—Simon Gray's harsh but extremely funny account of a London publisher who seeks to keep life at arm's length. Life, as usual, has different ideas. Dick Cavett (Steven Sutherland fills in for him on Wednesday afternoons) stars, and the director is Harold Pinter. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 246-9156. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

The Shadow Box—Hard to believe, but this play by Michael Cristofer, whose subject is death, is a highly affirmative and sometimes comic affair, well acted by, among others, Josef Sommer, Gwyda DonHowe, Sloane Shelton, and Maria Tucci. (Morosco, 217 W. 45th St. 246-6230. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Side by Side by Sondheim—An evening of delectable songs by the cleverest (and sometimes the most touching) of contemporary popular composers. The performers are modest and charming, as well as talented. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 246-4636. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

The Sponsor—A play by Ira Lewis, with Paul Sparer and Michael Strong. Opens Thursday, Sept. 15, and will run through Sunday, Oct. 2. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 246-7277. Thursday through Sunday, Sept. 15-18, and Friday through Sunday, Sept. 23-25, at 8.)

Your Arms Too Short to Box with God—Vinnette Carroll's singing-and-dancing redaction of the Book of Matthew. An exhilarating occasion. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. JU 2-3897. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 2 and 5:30.)

Long Runs—**BUBBLING BROWN SUGAR:** A joyful, if rather simpleminded, Cook's tour of Harlem in its golden age between the wars. The cast is lively and gifted, and the old songs are enchanting. (ANTA Theatre, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-6270. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 2:30.) . . . **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. A brilliant, innovative musical, conceived, choreographed, and directed by Michael Bennett. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 246-5990. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **THE CLUB:** Eve Merriam's musical entertainment is set in a gentlemen's club in 1903, but the com-

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

pany consists of seven women, lightly disguised in top hats, white tie, and tails, who sing and dance to authentic, indelicate songs of the period. As feminist projects go, this one is unusually good-humored, and the singing, and especially the dancing, under Tommy Tune's direction, is proficient and pleasing. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)... **EQUUS:** A psychological whodunit by Peter Shaffer. With Leonard Nimoy, Ralph Seymour, and Page Johnson. The director is John Dexter. (Helen Hayes, 210 W. 46th St. 246-6380. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2. Closes Saturday, Oct. 1.)... **THE FANTASTICKS:** 7,241 performances so far. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)... **FOR COLORED GIRLS WHO HAVE CONSIDERED SUICIDE:** The marvellous poems and prose of an American writer, Ntozake Shange, are spoken and danced to by seven remarkably gifted young black women. The director, Oz Scott, must be given high credit for the captivating result. Choreography by Paula Moss. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 246-5969. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)... **GREASE:** A musical (score, book, and lyrics by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey) that parodies, by faithful imitation, the songs and dances of the nineteen-fifties. The young cast performs capably and with spirit. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 245-5760. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)... **THE MAGIC SHOW:** A wretched musical, but the magic tricks make up for it all. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 489-6392. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 2 and 5.)... **OH! CALCUTTA!:** A collection of short sketches that purport to give us a refreshing view of sex and do not. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 757-7164. Mondays through Wednesdays, and Fridays, at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 9:30; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)... **SAME TIME, NEXT YEAR:** A slick and sentimental comedy about happy marriages and a single twenty-five-year-long, happy adultery, practiced annually. With Hope Lange and Don Murray. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 245-3430. Nightly, except Sundays and Thursdays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)... **SLY FOX:** Larry Gelbart has transmogrified Ben Jonson's "Volpone," with hilarious results. The cast includes Robert Preston, Jack Gilford, James Gallery, and John Heffernan. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 247-0472. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) ... **VANITIES:** In three acts, three Southern high-school girl cheerleaders change from all but identical "best friends" (1963) into quite different and incompatible New Yorkers (1974), in this amusing and gently ironic comedy by Jack Heifner. Garland Wright directed the attractive performance. (Downstairs at the Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)... **THE WIZ:** An elaborate and mostly successful version of "The Wizard of Oz," with an all-black cast of great talent. Directed by Geoffrey Holder, who also did the costumes. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. CI 7-7260. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

MISCELLANY

BEATLEMANIA—A multimedia and live-music production about the sixties, with four musicians doing thirty-seven songs written by John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and George Harrison. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 245-4878. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

BIG APPLE CIRCUS—A one-ring tent circus, sponsored by the New York School for Circus Arts. Comedy jugglers, acrobats, clowns, trapeze artists, and gymnasts. (Battery Park Landfill City. Wednesdays at 10:15 and 1:15;

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Thursdays and Saturdays at 1 and 7:30; Fridays at 7:30; and Sundays at 4 and 6:30. Closes Sunday, Sept. 25. For information about tickets, call 586-3581.)

ESTRADA—A variety show from the Soviet Union—folk and rock and pop music, mime, dance, and acts from the Moscow Circus. Opens Tuesday, Sept. 20, and will run through Saturday, Oct. 8. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 246-0730. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8; opening-night curtain at 6:45. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

DANCE

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE—Opening performance of a two-week engagement that starts Tuesday, Sept. 20, and will end on Sunday, Oct. 2. "The Nutcracker" will be presented through Sunday, Sept. 25. (Metropolitan Opera House. 580-9830. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Sundays at 2.)

KAZUKO HIRABAYASHI DANCE THEATRE—"Concerto," "Echoes," and "Farewell." (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. Friday, Sept. 23, at 8; Saturday, Sept. 24, at 3 and 8; and Sunday, Sept. 25, at 2. For information about tickets, call 581-2394.)

YATRAN—Sixty-five dancers, singers, and musicians from the Ukraine. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 246-4600. Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 21-22, at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town.... ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALI'S ALLEY, 77 Greene St., between Spring and Broome Sts. (226-9042)—Many of the best contemporary post-hard-bop and new-jazz musicians are booked into these quarters by its sympathetic proprietor, drummer Rashied Ali. Trumpeter Eddie Gale leads a quintet called the New York Movement through Saturday, Sept. 17; on Tuesday, Sept. 20, drummer **PHILLY JOE JONES** will begin a five-night stint with his group. Mondays belong to the seventeen-piece Art Jenkins-Sam Brown band. Music from about ten. Closed Sundays.

AXIS IN SOHO, in the M. Elson Gallery, 463 West Broadway, between Houston and Prince Sts. (228-0882)—Jazz and organic apple juice. Bassist Teruo Nakamura and his mainstream septet, the Rising Sun, perform on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 16-17. On Friday and Saturday, Sept. 23-24, trombonist **GEORGE LEWIS**, the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians' answer to the German virtuoso Albert Mangelsdorff, plays duets with his mentor (and the founder of the A.A.C.M.), pianist **MUHAL RICHARD ABRAMS**. Shows at nine and eleven-thirty.

BALLROOM, 458 West Broadway, between Houston and Prince Sts. (473-9367)—A long, narrow, very white room—white walls, white tables, and white chairs—with a self-conscious portrait of the club interior hanging near the stage. Liz Corrigan, the current attraction, sings a bit of Rodgers and Hart, a bit of bluegrass, a bit of gospel, a bit of seventies pop, with help from her able and understated backup trio. Although her repertoire is almost a collection of fragments, she has a pleasingly strong, colorful, wide-ranging voice. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at eight-thirty and ten-thirty, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dinner.

BAR NONE, 167 E. 33rd St. (684-3223)—Sort of thirties chophouse. The pianist **DARDANELLE** is on hand from seven until midnight, Tuesdays through Saturdays. Her playing is genteel Tatum, but her singing is pure, effortless, and delightful.

BEEFSTEAK CHARLIE'S, 55 Fifth Ave., at 12th St. (675-4720)—This enlightened branch of a thirty-eight-part restaurant chain brings in a variety of jazz players to perform in its cocktail lounge. Janet Lawson sings with a quartet through Saturday, Sept. 17. Wednesday through Saturday, Sept. 21-24, Teruo Nakamura's septet will be present. Music from nine until two Wednesdays and Thursdays, and from ten on Fridays and Saturdays. Dinner.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Folksinger and songwriter **TOM PAXTON**, whose decade-old compositions are still worth listening to, performs on Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 14-15; on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 16-17, Brazilian guitarist, singer, and composer **JOÃO GILBERTO** will make a rare appearance in a New York club; on Monday and Tuesday, Sept. 19-20, fiddler Papa John Creach—at sixty, one of the elder statesmen on the rock-and-roll circuit—will head his band. Shows at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and at nine and midnight Fridays and Saturdays. Dinner.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar with dark pine panelling, patrons who like to talk, and good musicians, mostly pianists and their bassists, who don't seem to mind playing through the talking. Pianist Ben Aronov works with a bassist through Saturday, Sept. 17. Music weeknights from ten. The Sunday chores are handled by **BARRY HARRIS** and his aides, from nine-thirty. Dinner.

CAFÉ CARLYLE, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (RH 4-1600)—Singer and pianist Hazel Scott finishes up on Saturday, Sept. 17. Then, on Tuesday, Sept. 20, **BOBBY SHORT** will return from his summer vacation. He and his sidekicks, bassist Beverly Peer and drummer Gene Gammage, go on at nine-forty-five and eleven-forty-five. Dinner and supper.

C.B.G.B. & O.M.F.U.G., 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—This bar, which has for a couple of years distinguished itself by presenting some of the most bizarre, if not always musically accomplished, rock and punk-rock bands around, continues breaking ground with a three-night (Thursday through Saturday, Sept. 15-17) booking of rhythm-and-blues weirdie **SCREAMIN' JAY HAWKINS**. Hawkins, who has a wonderful, bloodcurdling baritone voice, recorded in 1956 the R. & B. classic "I Put a Spell on You," which is complete with growls, screeches, and moans; and for his stage act, he used to dress like a Mau Mau or climb out of a coffin. Although Hawkins says he would like to sing ballads, his performances still manage to shake up his audiences. Music most nights from nine-thirty. Monday is showcase night.

COOKERY, 21 University Pl., at 8th St. (OR 4-4450)—**HELEN HUMES** is in action, smiling and gesturing and singing delicate ballads and authoritative blues. She's aided by pianist Gerry Wiggins. Blues pianist **SAMMY PRICE** performs on Sundays. Music from eight to one. Dining.

DAVID K'S, 1115 Third Ave., at 65th St. (371-9090)—**HUGH SHANNON**, the international café-society singer-pianist, will begin tossing off tunes by Porter, Coward, and Wonder (Stevie) on Wednesday, Sept. 21. He appears Wednesdays through Sundays from nine to two.

EDDIE CONDON'S, 144 W. 54th St. (265-8277)—Bobby Gordon, Vic Dickenson, Jim Andrews, Connie Kay, Warren Vaché, and Red Balaban (who owns the place) are the traditionalists who usually make up the house band. They're here Mondays through Saturdays from nine-thirty. Trumpeter **JIMMY MAXWELL** will sit in with the band on Tuesday, Sept.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

20. On Sunday, Sept. 18, saxophonist Gerard Badini heads up a swing quartet from eight-thirty. Dinner.

Gregory's, *1149 First Ave., at 63rd St. (371-2220)*—An attractive haunt, short on space but not on music: Mondays and Tuesdays from ten to three, pianist Ben Aronov works with guitarist **Chuck Wayne** and bassist Jamil Nasser. Wednesdays through Saturdays, pianist **Hod O'Brien** holds down the fort while his senior partners, Sonny Greer and Russell Procope, take time off; singer Alicia Sherman and bassist Frank Luther work with O'Brien from ten to three, and the trio spends most of Sunday here, too, playing from seven to three. Weeknights from five to ten, trumpeter Gene Roland, guitarist Jim Watkins, and bassist Morris Edwards get together on the tiny bandstand.

Hopper's, 452 Sixth Ave., at 11th St. (260-0250)—Seven-string guitarist **Bucky Pizzarelli**, *who is a mild-mannered, tranquil soloist,* and bassist **Slam Stewart**, who is neither mild-mannered nor tranquil as a soloist, wind up a two-week-long partnership on Saturday, Sept. 17. On Monday, Sept. 19, vocalist **Anita O'Day** will arrive with pianist Norman Simmons, bassist Jay Leonhart, and drummer John Poole. Shows Mondays through Thursdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine-thirty, eleven-thirty, and one o'clock. No music Sundays.

Jimmy Ryan's, 154 W. 54th St. (664-9700)—**Roy Eldridge** is buoyed by the resident blowers—pianist Johnny Morris, drummer Eddie Locke, clarinettist Joe Muranyi, bassist Ted Sturgis, and trombonist Bobby Pratt. On Mondays, Max Kaminsky leads the group. Music weeknights from nine-thirty to three. *On Sundays, Kaminsky directs another group* of musical archivists from eight until two.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Tenor saxophonist **Earle Warren**, trombonist **Dicky Wells**, pianist **Dill Jones**, drummer **Jackie Williams**, and bassist **Franklin Skeete** have all moved downtown from the Third Phase, the Columbia University haunt where they usually perform as the Countsmen. They're here Tuesdays through Saturdays from nine-fifteen. On Mondays, from nine-thirty to midnight, Woody Allen comes and goes, talking of Lorenzo Tio. Dinner and supper. Closed Sundays.

Mikell's, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—An often crowded upper West Side jazz-and-soul café. Local groups—aspiring and established ones—gather here. Music from about ten until three. Dinner.

Other End, 149 Bleecker St. (673-7030)—The Alessi Brothers band performs soft-rock numbers through Sunday, Sept. 18; on Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 20-21, Eric Andersen, Happy and Artie Traum, and others will participate in what the management calls the Woodstock Mountain Review; and on Thursday, Sept. 22, singer Andy Gibb, whose three older brothers are the Bee Gees, will come in for four nights. Shows most nights at nine and eleven-thirty; on Fridays and Saturdays at nine and midnight. Snacks.

Rainbow Room, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (PL 7-9090)—Lots of tourists, a few sagacious natives, and **Sy Oliver's** bouncing dance septet populate Art Deco-land. The band works Tuesdays through Thursdays from seven to one; Fridays and Saturdays from eight to two; and Sundays from six to midnight. Dining.

Reno Sweeney, 126 W. 13th St. (691-0900)—Sarah Dash, who was formerly one-third of the vocal trio Labelle, sings at nine and midnight nightly, except Mondays. On Wednesday, Sept. 21, **Blossom Dearie** will return with her cocktail-hour concerts (from five-thirty to seven). Dinner.

Storyville, 41 E. 58th St. (755-1640)—A big, warm, informal belowstairs room. Saxophonist Robin Kenyatta leads his sextet—the group includes a bebop accordionist—through Saturday, Sept. 17; on Monday, Sept. 19, saxophonist Brian Madden's quintet will perform; and on Tuesday, Sept. 20, thunderbolt drummer **Elvin Jones** will bring in a quintet. Music from about ten. Snacks. Closed Sundays.

Stryker's, 103 W. 86th St., at Columbus Ave. (874-8754)—**Dave Matthews** has returned with his Monday-night big band; altoist **Lee Konitz**, always worth hearing, fronts a nonet on Tuesdays and a trio on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 16-17; on Wednesdays, guitarist **Joe Puma** drops by with various and sundry musical colleagues; on Thursday, Sept. 15, tenor saxophonist *Bennie Wallace's trio will be here;* on Sunday, Sept. 18, trombonist Harry Shields and five other trombonists get together with a rhythm section; and on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 23-24, trumpeter **Chet Baker** and his youthful neo-cool-jazz apprentices will take over. Music from nine-thirty.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Tenor saxophonist **Charlie Rouse** *leads a septet through Saturday, Sept. 17; on* Tuesday, Sept. 20, pianist **Kenny Barron** will arrive with a quartet. Sundays and Mondays are reserved for alto saxophonist **Bob Mover** and a quintet that includes Barron, drummer **Ben Riley**, and bassist **Michael Moore**. Music from about nine-thirty. Dinner.

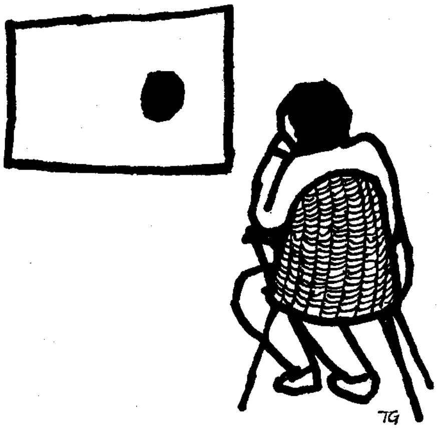
Third Phase, 2864 Broadway, at 111th St. (749-0200)—Transplanted (from the West End, up the street) swing music. Mondays through Thursdays, trumpeter Franc Williams heads up a quartet that features trombonist and electric-guitar pioneer Eddie Durham. On Sunday, Sept. 18, another swing group will occupy the stage; on Friday, Sept. 23, boogie-woogie specialist **Sammy Price** will be in charge of a quartet; and on Saturday, Sept. 24, trumpeter Ed Lewis's quintet will pay *tribute to Fats Navarro. Music from eight* Sundays through Thursdays; from nine-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Light menu, no liquor.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—Guitar whiz **Larry Coryell** will perform solo concerts at the Top of the Gate, Fridays and Saturdays at ten and midnight. Oregon, a jazz-and-raga quartet, will be downstairs on *Friday and Saturday,* Sept. 16-17, at nine and eleven-thirty; and on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 23-24, pianist **Bill Evans**, bassist **Eddie Gomez**, and drummer **Elliot Zigmund** will go on (also in the downstairs room) at ten and midnight. Snacks.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (989-9011)—A noble, if smoke-filled, institution. **Chet Baker** and his quartet perform *through* Sunday, Sept. 18; on Tuesday, Sept. 20, **Zoot Sims**, who plays dancing tenor solos, will descend the stairs with a quartet. The Monday-night institution within an institution, the **Thad Jones-Mel Lewis** band, is alive, well, and, fortunately, between tours. Music from ten.

West Boondock, 114 Tenth Ave., at 17th St. (924-9723)—The soul-food craze is still *going strong in this popular,* out-of-the-way bar and restaurant. Mondays through Wednesdays, Sonelius Smith, who usually wears a floppy felt hat, is at the piano; Thursdays through Sundays, pianist Armen Donelian works with a bassist. Music from eight to two.

West End Café, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—Four-string guitarist **Tiny Grimes** leads a trio on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The rest of the week is allotted to fledgling and more experienced musicians. Music from nine-thirty to one-thirty, except Mondays. Student food at student prices.



JAZZ/FOLK/ROCK CONCERTS, PERSONAL APPEARANCES, ETC.

Marvin Gaye and **the Average White Band**—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 246-4600. Friday, Sept. 16, at 7 and 10:30; Saturday, Sept. 17, at 7:30 and 11; and Sunday, Sept. 18, at 3 and 8.

Idris Muhamad, First Choice, and **Pleasure**—Felt Forum, Madison Square Garden, Eighth Ave. between 31st and 33rd Sts. 564-4400. Friday, Sept. 16, at 7.

Steve Martin and **John Sebastian**—Avery Fisher Hall. TR 4-2424. Friday, Sept. 16, at 8 and 11:30.

Tex Allen Quintet—New York Jazz Museum, 236 W. 54th St. 765-2150. Saturday, Sept. 17, from 2 to 5.

Dollar Brand—Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. Saturday, Sept. 17, at 8.

Shalom '77—A variety show of singing and dancing by performers from Israel. (Radio City Music Hall. Monday and Tuesday, Sept. 19-20, at 8.)

Kris Kristofferson and Rita Coolidge and **Billy Swan**—Radio City Music Hall. Friday and Saturday, Sept. 23-24, at 8.

Brothers Johnson—Carnegie Hall. CI 7-7459. Friday and Saturday, Sept. 23-24, at 8.

Note—Film clips and short features that document the times and styles of various celebrated jazz musicians will again be exhibited by the New York Jazz Museum on a weekly schedule starting Wednesday, Sept. 21, at 7:30, when the offering will be "Jazz Dance"—Count Basie, Jimmy McPartland, Claude Hopkins, and Duke Ellington. (New York Jazz Museum, 236 W. 54th St. 765-2150.)

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES

Miriam Bloom—A selection of large earth-colored or black papier-mâché sculptures, all of them in the basic shape of a bowl and imbued with the mysterious aura of having been pulled from the middle of the earth. Through Oct. 8. (Truman, 38 E. 57th St.)

Harrison Burns / Hunt Slonem—Video images of the Taj Mahal and the White House precisely reproduced in acrylics on paper by an artist who had spent months reinterpreting one of Goya's blacker paintings and needed a change. / Brightly colored still-lifes of such objects as pillows and furs. Through Sept. 29. (Fischbach, 29 W. 57th St.)

Sari Dienes—Silhouette portraits cut out of aluminum, cardboard, and other materials and mounted on the gallery walls. Through Oct. 5. (A.I.R., 97 Wooster St.)

Christopher James—A series of photographic prints that have been hand-dyed and coated with translucent enamels. Through Oct. 8. (Esman, 29 W. 57th St.)

Raffi Kaiser—Surrealist paintings and drawings in which medieval elements—sky-borne galleons, ghostly suits of armor playing at cards, fragments of crumbled architecture and decorative bric-a-brac—are brought together in odd harmony. The artist is an Israeli now based in Paris. First one-man show in New York. Through Oct. 8. (Aberbach, 988 Madison Ave., at 77th St.)

Peter Lobello—Wall pieces and tabletop sculptures made of nickel-plated steel, most of them composed of hinged geometric parts that the viewer is invited to bend and fold into new structures. Through Saturday, Sept. 24. (Iolas, 52 E. 57th St.)

Robert Morgan—Realist landscapes, some with figures, that were done in Venice; first one-man show in New York. Through Saturday, Sept. 24. (Bodley, 1063 Madison Ave., at 80th St.)

Ree Morton *(1936-77)—Two-panel paintings in* which the top panel shows a sunset framed by a three-dimensional papier-mâchélike drapery, and the lower panel depicts tropical fish. Also drawings. Through Oct. 1. (Droll-Kolbert, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Russell Patterson (1894-1977)—A retrospective

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of this illustrator's works includes drawings, watercolors, stage sets, and marionettes. Through Sept. 30. (Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

George Peck / Sam Tchakalian—Complex tones of black, some matte and some glossy, by an artist who grinds his own pigments from rocks and paints on shaped convex canvases. / Two outsize paintings, about twenty feet long, and some smaller works, in which backgrounds of one dominant color are divided into horizontal panels by streaky brushmarks. Through Oct. 1. (Caldwell, 383 West Broadway.)

Michael Price—Figurative bronzes, most of them life-size, by a sculptor who uses the lost-wax process. Through Oct. 1. (Krasner, 1043 Madison Ave., at 80th St.)

Robert Reed—Abstract collages and prints. Through Oct. 1. (Washburn, 42 E. 57th St.)

Salvatore Romano—A single large moving sculpture. Through Oct. 15. (Sculpture Now, 142 Greene St.)

Lucy Sallick—Still-lifes centering on two themes: studio furnishings and seascapes, grouped together. Through Oct. 5. (SoHo 20, 99 Spring St. Opens at noon.)

Joyce Stillman-Myers—Superrealist paintings of, say, a box of gleaming Christmas ornaments or a kitchen sink full of suds and dishes. Through Oct. 1. (Meisel, 141 Prince St.)

Larry Tritten / Frank Culotta—Color photographs. / An outdoor piece made of rubber bands which literally stretches from the gallery's exterior wall to another wall across the street. Also smaller works in the same medium. Through Sept. 28. (Razor, 464 West Broadway. Opens at noon.)

Dick Wray—Loose-jointed Abstract-Expressionist oils and drawings by a Texas artist trained as an architect; first one-man show in New York. Through Sept. 29. (Lerner-Heller, 956 Madison Ave., at 75th St.)

Brooklyn College Art Faculty—Paintings, sculptures, photographs, drawings, and prints by current faculty members, including Lennart Anderson, Lois Dodd, and Sylvia Stone, at the **schoelkopf**, 825 Madison Ave., at 69th St. (Mondays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5:30) and by former members Mark Rothko, Berenice Abbott, and Joseph Stefanelli, among others, at **davis & long**, 746 Madison Ave., at 65th St. (Mondays through Fridays, 10 to 5.) Through Oct. 8.

Group Shows—At the **acquavella**, 18 E. 79th St.: Paintings and sculptures by Frankenthaler, Caro, Kline, and others. Through Sept. 30. (Open Mondays; closed Saturdays.) . . . **55 mercer street gallery:** Lois Baron, Cynthia Eardley, Barbara Knight, and Gail von der Lippe, showing paintings, sculptures, and constructions. Through Saturday, Sept. 24. . . . **nicholls**, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.: The contemporary art scene is the common subject of this group of cartoons and magazine covers by Charles Addams, Whitney Darrow, Jr., Arthur Getz, Charles E. Martin, Warren Miller, Frank Modell, Mary Petty, George Price, Charles Saxon, William Steig, James Stevenson, Richard Taylor, and Barney Tobey. Through Oct. 1. . . . **united states court house**, 40 Centre St., on Foley Square: Forty-three members of the Organization of Independent Artists are displaying their works in the lobby of the Federal Courthouse and in the lunchroom on the fifth floor. Nearly all the works are wholly abstract. Through Friday, Sept. 16. (Mondays through Fridays, 9 to 5:30.) . . . **wauters**, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.: Eighty-two drawings from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which afford some interesting contrasts—Delacroix nudes with one of Tom Wesselmann's, for instance. Through Oct. 1.

Note—Some galleries launch the fall season with group shows of works by artists regularly associated with them. A few of these galleries are the **alonzo**, 30 W. 57th St. . . . **cooper**, 155 Wooster St. . . . **cordier & ekstrom**, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. . . . **forum**, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. . . . **knowlton**, 19 E. 71st St. . . . **midtown**, 11 E. 57th St. . . . **weber**, 420 West Broadway.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Alexander Alland—Photographs of New York made in 1938. Through Oct. 1. (Prakapas, 19 E. 71st St.)

Chauncey Hare—A show of interiors of homes and other spaces has been mounted by the Museum of Modern Art. See below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

Herta Hilscher-Wittgenstein—Black-and-white photographs, mostly of nudes. Through Oct. 8. (Genesis, 41 E. 57th St.)

Irving Penn—A hundred and twenty-five platinum prints from his entire career. Through Oct. 11. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St.)

Larry Williams—Recent black-and-white works. Through Oct. 1. (Light, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Tad Yamashiro—Silver-emulsion prints on handmade paper. Through Sept. 30. (Arsenal Gallery, 830 Fifth Ave., at 64th St. Mondays through Fridays, 9 to 4:45.)

Group Show—George A. Tice showing a series of portraits of Artie Van Blarcum, a New Jersey factory worker and amateur photographer; Mr. Van Blarcum showing his own works; and Ruth Bernhard showing still-lifes and nudes in black-and-white. Through Oct. 8. (Witkin, 41 E. 57th St.)

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—Paintings, drawings, and prints by the French Neo-Impressionist Paul Signac, all taken from the museum's collections. Through Nov. 27. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 8:45; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 4:45; Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—Book jackets, posters, magazine covers, and such, juxtaposed with architectural models, furniture, decorations—all produced in Holland, Germany, and the Soviet Union between 1920 and 1940—in a show that underscores the relationship between graphics and other art forms. Through Oct. 31. . . . ¶ Recently acquired drawings by women artists, among them Mary Petty, Alexandra Exter, and Lee Krasner. Through Tuesday, Sept. 20. . . . **photography:** Chauncey Hare. Through Oct. 23. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.) . . . **note:** The museum's sculpture garden, 8 W. 54th St., is open, free, Fridays through Sundays, 6 to 10. On Friday and Saturday, Sept. 16-17, a program of music composed by Leonard Bernstein, including his one-act opera, "Trouble in Tahiti," and eight songs, will be given. On Friday and Saturday, Sept. 23-24, a program of contemporary music. All performances begin at 8.

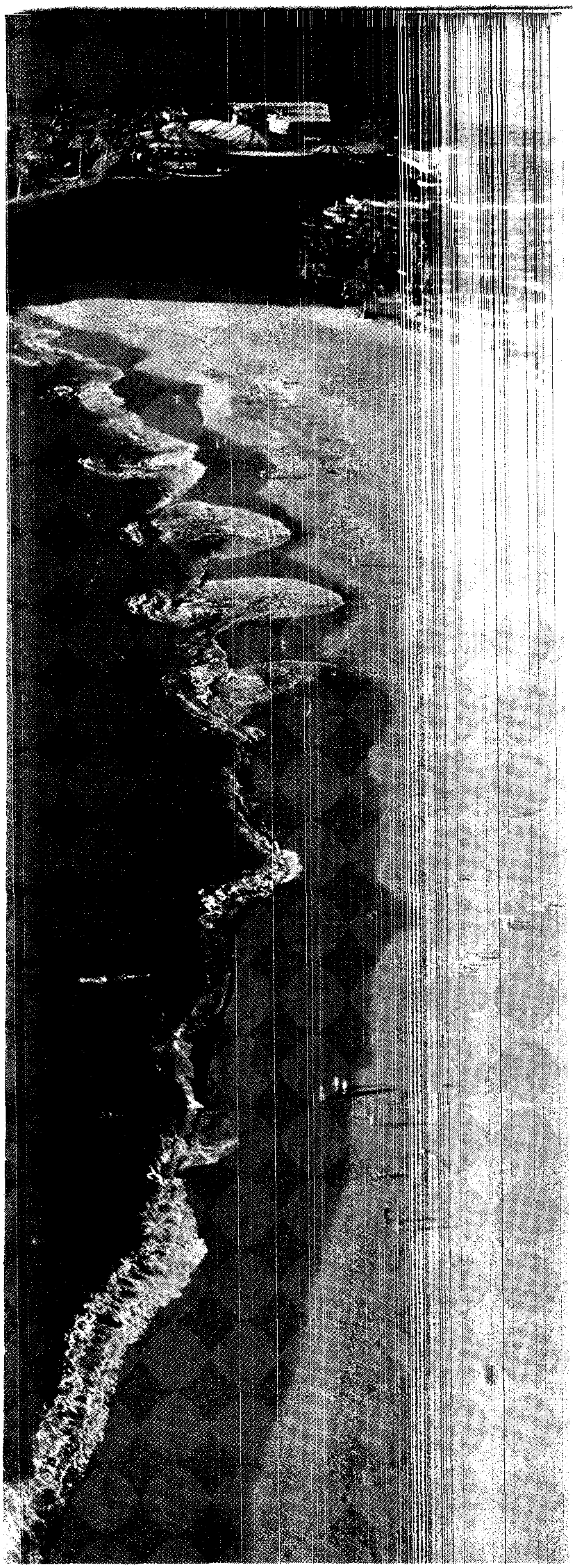
Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave., at 89th St.—Paintings, sculptures, and works on paper acquired by the museum during the past year. Louise Nevelson, Richard Diebenkorn, and Eva Hesse are among those represented. Starts Friday, Sept. 16. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

Whitney Museum, 945 Madison Ave., at 75th St.—The years 1890 to 1910 are covered in an exhibit of nearly three hundred paintings, graphics, and photographs by Thomas Eakins, Mary Cassatt, Charles Dana Gibson, Gertrude Käsebier, and others. Through Oct. 2. . . . ¶ An exhibit of works of twentieth-century artists—Burchfield, Calder, Christo, Johns among them—from collections owned by Friends of the Whitney. Through Sept. 27. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 9, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—More than fifty large color woodcuts made by Carol Summers during the last twenty-five years. Through Sept. 25. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays. Hours: Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5. The Summers show opens at 1:30 on Fridays and Saturdays.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—The Hall of Minerals and Gems, occupying one-third of an acre in space, has on display such stones as the deLong Star ruby, the Star of India sapphire, and the Patricia emerald. (Open daily. Hours: Weekdays, 10 to 4:45, and Wednesday evenings until 9; Sundays, 11 to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—Manuscripts and autograph letters by nineteenth-century luminaries, among them Washington Irving, Thoreau, Emily Dickinson, and Henry James.



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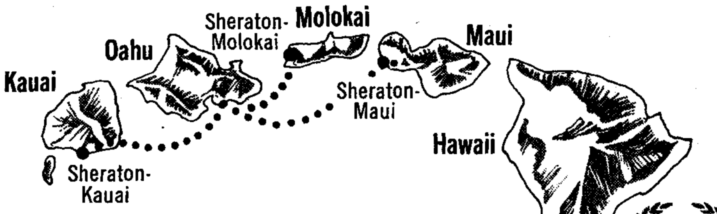

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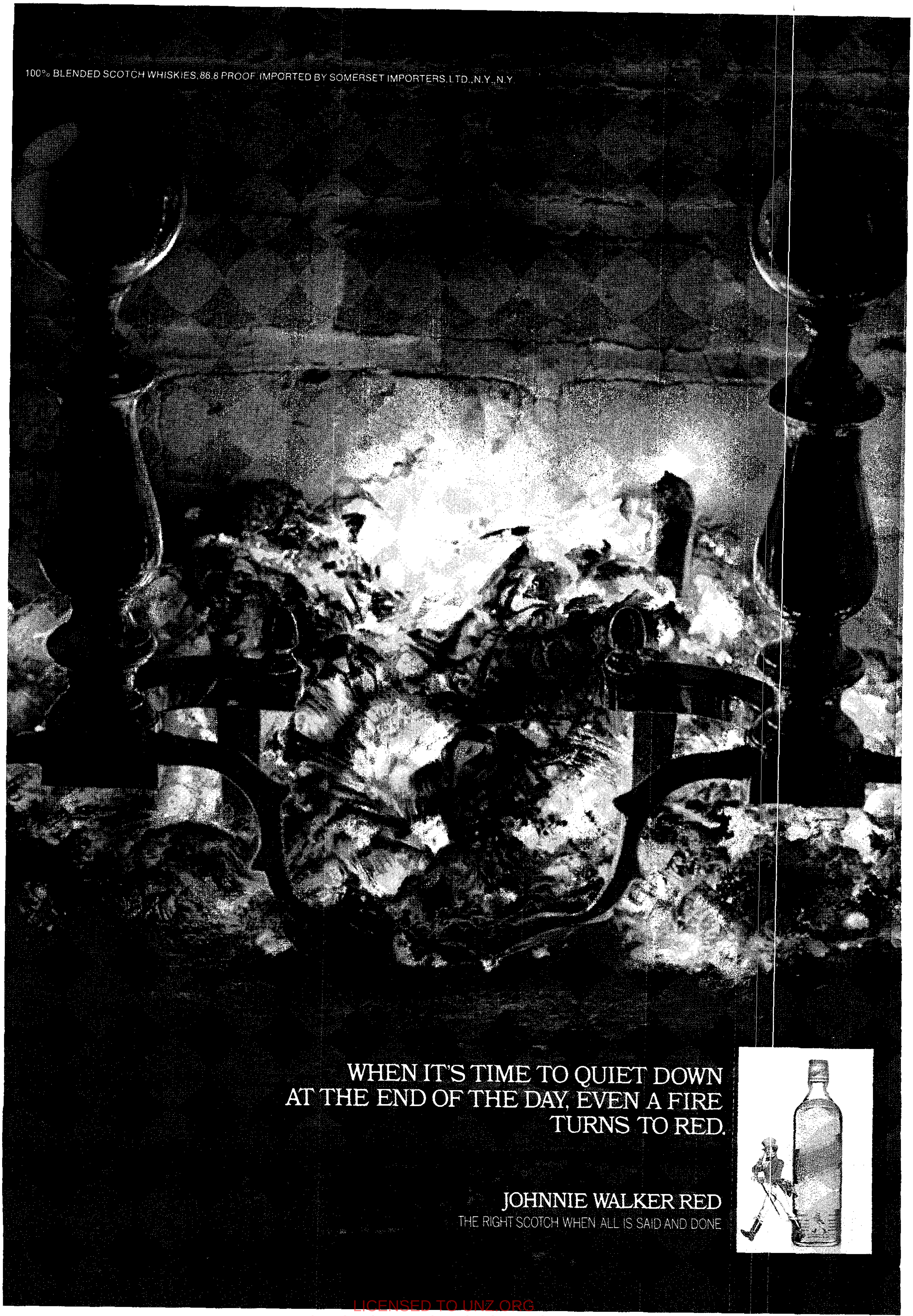
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Museum of Contemporary Crafts, 29 W. 53rd St.—Sculptures, works on paper, and poetry are displayed jointly in a big show murkily entitled "The Object as Poet." It is intended to celebrate the interaction between a poet's work and a craftsman's work; in some cases the interaction is direct collaboration (Howard Moss and Cletus Johnson), and in others it is more tenuous, or even a one-man operation (Saul Steinberg, Margaret Israel, Betye Saar). Through Sept. 25. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

MUSIC

(The box-office number for Avery Fisher Hall is TR 4-2424 and for Carnegie Hall CI 7-7459.)

OPERA

New York City Opera—Wednesday, Sept. 14, at 8: "Cavalleria Rusticana," with Maralin Niska, Enrico Di Giuseppe, and William Justus; and "Pagliacci," with Diana Soviero, Herman Malamood, Pablo Elvira, and Charles Roe. Cal Stewart Kellogg conducting both. ... ¶ Thursday, Sept. 15, at 8: "Manon," with Beverly Sills, Michele Molese, Richard Fredricks, Richard T. Gill, Robert Hale, and Nico Castel; Julius Rudel.... ¶ Friday, Sept. 16, at 8: "Die Fledermaus" (in English), with Johanna Meier, Elizabeth Haley, David Griffith, Howard Hensel, Dominic Cossa, David Rae Smith, Richard McKee, and Coley Worth; Imre Pallo.... ¶ Saturday, Sept. 17, at 2: "Turandot," with Nancy Tatum, Mariana Niculescu, Kenneth Collins, Richard T. Gill, and Thomas Jamerson; Julius Rudel.... ¶ Saturday, Sept. 17, at 8: "Carmen," with Ann Howard, Faye Robinson, Jacque Trussel, and David Holloway; Imre Pallo.... ¶ Sunday, Sept. 18, at 1: "Manon," with Beverly Sills, Michele Molese, Richard Fredricks, Richard T. Gill, Robert Hale, and Nico Castel; Julius Rudel.... ¶ Sunday, Sept. 18, at 7: "Madame Butterfly," with Maralin Niska, Diane Curry, Richard Taylor, and Dominic Cossa; Giuseppe Morelli.... ¶ Tuesday, Sept. 20, at 8: "Manon," with Beverly Sills, Richard Fredricks, Robert Hale, and Nico Castel; Julius Rudel.... ¶ Thursday, Sept. 22, at 8: "The Marriage of Figaro" (in English), with Johanna Meier, Catherine Malfitano, Delia Wallis, Samuel Ramey, William Justus, and Richard McKee; Julius Rudel.... ¶ Friday, Sept. 23, at 8: "La Traviata," with Faye Robinson, Jacque Trussel, and Dominic Cossa; Imre Pallo.... ¶ Saturday, Sept. 24, at 2: "Rigoletto," with Gianna Rolandi, Sandra Walker, Enrico Di Giuseppe, Pablo Elvira, and Will Roy; Imre Pallo.... ¶ Saturday, Sept. 24, at 8: "La Bohème," with Mariana Niculescu, Sherry Zannoth, Lando Bartolini, William Justus, Robert Hale, and Thomas Jamerson; Giuseppe Morelli. (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. TR 7-4727. Through Sunday, Nov. 13.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall—Erich Leinsdorf conducting on Wednesday, Sept. 14, at 8:30, an all-Wagner non-subscription concert, for the benefit of the Philharmonic (with Janis Martin, soprano; Jon Vickers, tenor; and John Cheek, bass); and a varied program on Thursday, Sept. 15, at 8:30; Friday, Sept. 16, at 2; Saturday, Sept. 17, at 8:30; and Tuesday, Sept. 20, at 7:30 (all with Wanda Wilkomirska, violin).... ¶ Zubin Mehta conducting on Thursday, Sept. 22, at 8:30; Friday, Sept. 23, at 2; Saturday, Sept. 24, at 8:30; and Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 7:30 (all with Shirley Verrett, soprano).

A Swedish Musical Odyssey—Ulf Björlin conducting the American Symphony Orchestra in a program entitled "Music of the Sea," with Sven-Bertil Taube, balladeer. (Carnegie Hall. Wednesday, Sept. 14, at 8.)

Sarah Lawrence Chorus—Harold Aks directing, with the Laurentian String Quartet and An-

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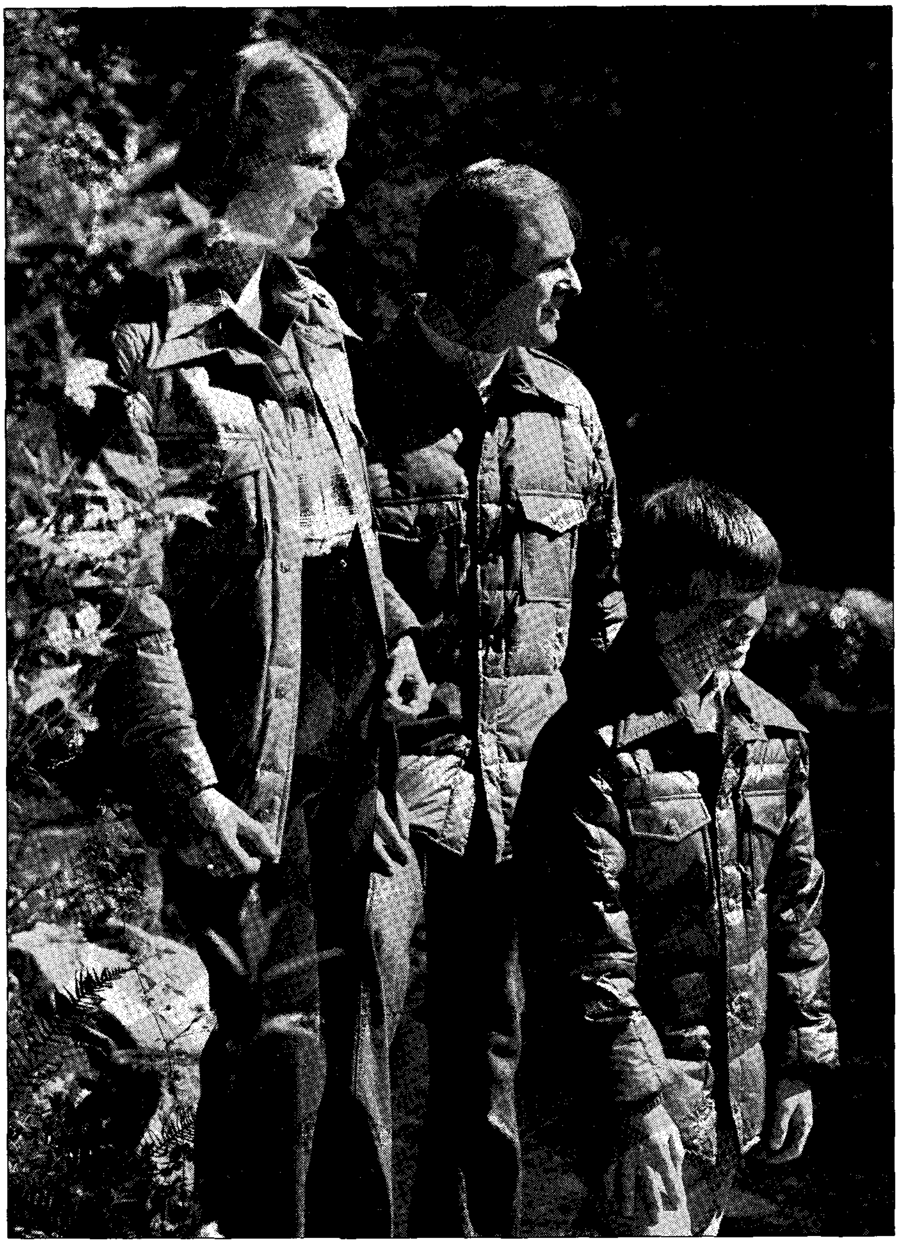

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

gela Levy, harpsichord. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Sunday, Sept. 18, at 8.)

RECITALS

Walter Hilse—Organ. (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. Wednesday, Sept. 14, at 8.)

Oliver Steiner—Violin. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Monday, Sept. 19, at 8.)

Jerome Rosen—Playing the complete sonatas and partitas for unaccompanied violin by Bach, in two recitals. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Friday and Saturday, Sept. 23-24, at 8.)

MISCELLANY

Grenadier Guards and Scots Guards—The Regimental Band of the Grenadier Guards and *the Pipes, Drums, and Dancers of the Scots* Guards. (Madison Square Garden, Eighth Ave. between 31st and 33rd Sts. 564-4400. Saturday, Sept. 24, at 8, and Sunday, Sept. 25, at 2.)

SPORTS

Baseball—**YANKEES** at Yankee Stadium: Vs. Boston, Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 14-15, at 8. . . . **METS** at Shea Stadium: Vs. Chicago, Friday, Sept. 16, at 7:05 (to finish the game suspended by the July 13th blackout, plus the regularly scheduled game); Saturday, Sept. 17, at 2:05; and Sunday, Sept. 18, at 1:05 (doubleheader). . . . ¶ Pittsburgh, Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 20-21, at 8:05. . . . ¶ St. Louis, Friday, Sept. 23, at 8:05, and Saturday, Sept. 24, at 2:05.

College Football—**SATURDAY, SEPT. 17:** Army vs. V.M.I., at West Point, at 1:30. . . . ¶ Columbia vs. Harvard, at Baker Field, at 1:30. . . . ¶ Dartmouth vs. Princeton, at Hanover, at 1:30. . . . ¶ Fordham vs. Kean State, at Fordham, at 1:30. . . . ¶ Pennsylvania vs. Cornell, at *Philadelphia*, at 7:30. . . . ¶ *Rutgers* vs. Bucknell, at New Brunswick, at 1:30. . . . ¶ Yale vs. Brown, at New Haven, at 1:50. . . . **SATURDAY, SEPT. 24** (all games at 1:30): Boston College vs. Army, at Chestnut Hill. . . . ¶ Columbia vs. Lafayette, at Baker Field. . . . ¶ Cornell vs. Colgate, at Ithaca. . . . ¶ Dartmouth vs. Holy Cross, at Hanover. . . . ¶ Princeton vs. Rutgers, at Princeton. . . . ¶ Yale vs. Connecticut, at New Haven.

Professional Football—Sunday, Sept. 18: Giants vs. Washington Redskins, at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands, East Rutherford, N.J., at 1. . . . ¶ Jets vs. Houston Oilers, at Houston.

Hockey—Islanders vs. Philadelphia Flyers, in *an exhibition game.* (Nassau Coliseum, Hempstead Turnpike, Uniondale, L.I. 516 794-9100. Saturday, Sept. 24, at 8:05.)

Racing—At **BELMONT:** Weekdays at 1:30: through Saturday, Oct. 15. The Woodward Handicap and the Lawrence Realization, Saturday, Sept. 17; the Matron, Wednesday, Sept. 21; and the Ruffian Handicap, Saturday, Sept. 24. (Frequent trains leave Penn Station for the track Mondays through Fridays between 11 and 1:10, and Saturdays between 11 and 1:15.) . . . **MEADOWLANDS**, East Rutherford, N.J.: Weeknights at 8; through Saturday, Dec. 31.

Tennis—W.C.T. Tournament of Champions Final, between Harold Solomon and Ken Rosewall, plus a pro-celebrity match with Ilie Nastase and Vitas Gerulaitis. (Madison Square Garden, Eighth Ave. between 31st and 33rd Sts. 564-4400. Friday, Sept. 16, at 7.)

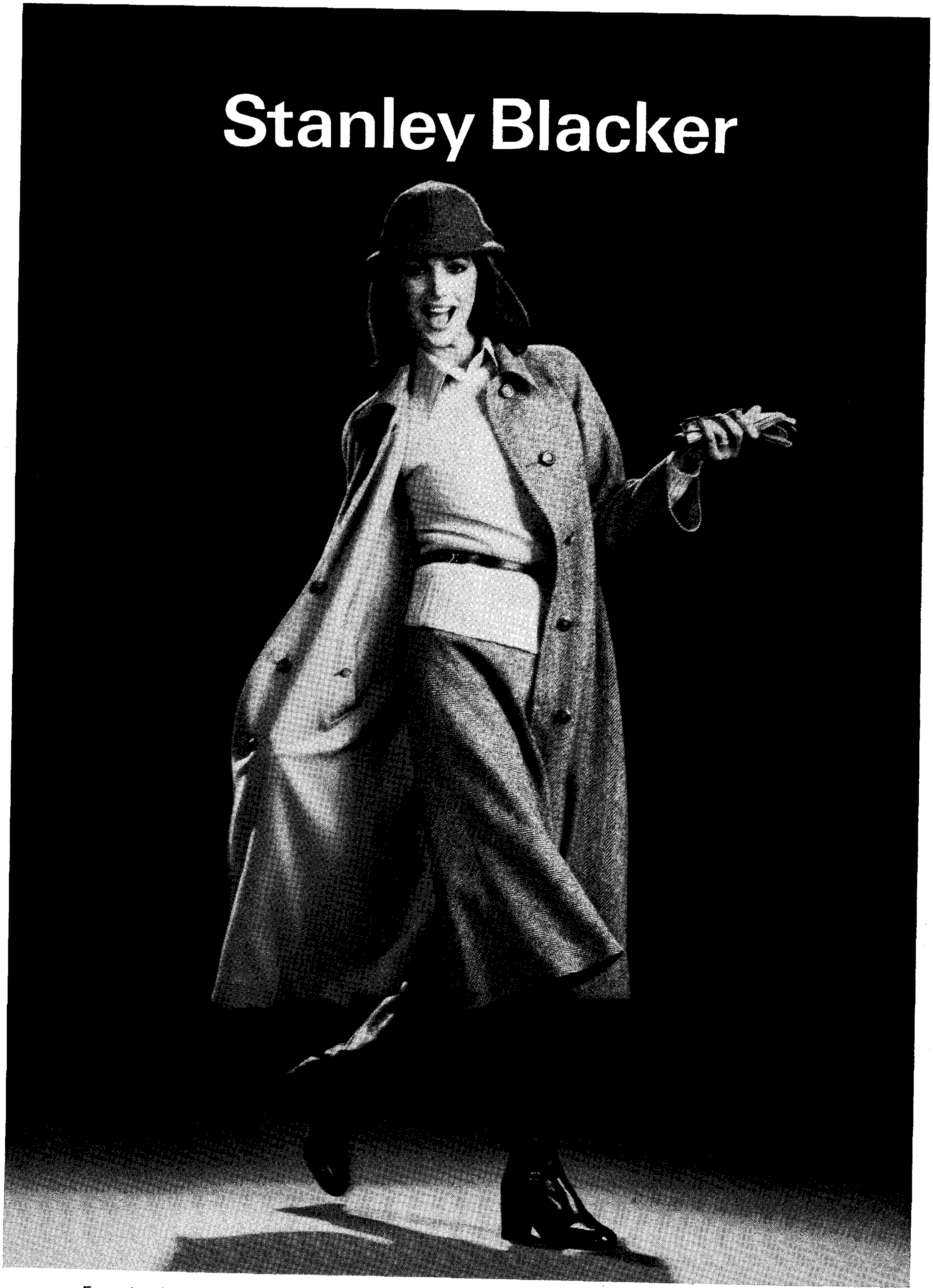
Trotting—At Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8; through Saturday, Nov. 5.

ET ALIA

(The New York Parks Department number to call for information about all free entertainment in the city is 755-4100.)

Auctions—At Sotheby Parke Bernet, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (Exhibition hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5.)—Saturday, Sept. 17, at 2: English furniture and decorations, from many owners. . . . ¶ Friday and Saturday, Sept. 23-24, at 10:15 and 2: English and Continental furniture and decorations, silver, clocks, porcelains, and paintings; from the estate of Mrs. Lytle Hull. Exhibition starts Saturday, Sept. 17.

Washington Square Outdoor Art Exhibit—The semiannual show is on view daily, from noon until sundown; through Sunday, Sept. 18.



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22		

THE FILMS PLAYING THE REGULAR MOVIE HOUSES ARE DESCRIBED IN BRIEF IN THE SECTION BELOW

EAST SIDE

Art, 36 E. 8th. (GR 3-7014)
“Cría!”

St. Marks Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 8th. (533-9292)
Through Sept. 20: “Greased Lightning” and “Little Murders.”
From Sept. 21: To be announced.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (GR 5-1660)
Through Sept. 20: “3 Women.”
From Sept. 21: “Cría!”

Murray Hill, 160 E. 34th. (685-7652)
“Star Wars.”

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
“One on One.”

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
“The Kentucky Fried Movie.”

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (PL 9-1411)
“The Last Remake of Beau Geste.”

Trans-Lux East, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (PL 9-2262)
To be announced.

Fine Arts, 130 E. 58th. (755-6030)
“One on One.”

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (EL 5-3320)
“In the Realm of the Senses.”

Baronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
“Pardon Mon Affaire.”

Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
“The Other Side of Midnight.”

59th St. East, 220 E. 59th. (688-0750)
“The Savage Is Loose.”

D. W. Griffith, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)
Through Sept. 20: “Fantastic Animation Festival.”
From Sept. 21: “Dirty Duck” (X-rated).

Cinema I, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (PL 3-6022)
“I Never Promised You a Rose Garden.”

Cinema II, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (PL 3-0774)
“Outrageous!”

Columbia I, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
“The Spy Who Loved Me.”

Columbia II, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-2720)
“The Spy Who Loved Me.”

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (RE 7-2622)
“La Grande Bourgeoise.”

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (RE 4-0302)
Through Sept. 17: “The First Nudie Musical.”
From Sept. 18: “Let Joy Reign Supreme.”

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
“You Light Up My Life.”

72nd Street East, 1st Ave. at 72nd. (BU 8-9304)
Through Sept. 20: “The Deep.”
From Sept. 21: To be announced.

Trans-Lux 85th St., Madison at 85th. (BU 8-3180)
To be announced.

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
“Dynasty” (3-D).

Loews Orpheum, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
“Star Wars.”

Loews Ciné, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (427-1332)
“The Spy Who Loved Me.”

86th St. East, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Through Sept. 15: “The Bad News Bears in Breaking Training.”
From Sept. 16: “MacArthur.”

R.K.O. 86th St. Twin 1, Lexington at 86th. (289-8900)
“Suspiria.”

R.K.O. 86th St. Twin 2, Lexington at 86th. (289-8932)
“By the Blood of Others.”

WEST SIDE

Waverly, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
“Chac.”

Renoir Cinema, 100 Seventh Ave. S., at Sheridan Square. (873-8702; theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
Sept. 14: “The River and Death.”
Sept. 15-18: “The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de la Cruz.”
Sept. 19-21: “The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe.”
Sept. 22: “Le Joli Mai.”

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
Through Sept. 15: “Fantastic Animation Festival.”
From Sept. 16: “Sorcerer” and “Obsession.”

Greenwich, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Through Sept. 20: “A Bridge Too Far.”
From Sept. 21 (tentative): “The Spy Who Loved Me.”

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: “The Kentucky Fried Movie.”
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 20: “Stroszek.” From Sept. 21: “The First Nudie Musical.”
Theatre 3: “By the Blood of Others.”
Theatre 4: Through Sept. 20: “Dynasty” (3-D). From Sept. 21: “Dirty Duck” (X-rated).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (PL 7-2406)
Through Sept. 15: “You Light Up My Life.”
From Sept. 16: “MacArthur.”

Playboy, 110 W. 57th. (JU 6-4448)
Through Sept. 20: “Nasty Habits.”
From Sept. 21: To be announced.

Little Carnegie, 146 W. 57th. (246-5123)
Sept. 14: “The Sensual Man.”
From Sept. 15: “Allegro Non Troppo.”

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
“Black and White in Color.”

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
“A Woman’s Decision.”

Paramount, B’way at 61st. (247-5070)
“Fantastic Animation Festival.”

Cinema Studio, B’way at 66th. (877-4040)
“Aguirre, the Wrath of God.”

Embassy 72nd St., B’way at 72nd. (SC 4-6745)
To be announced.

Loews 83rd Triplex, B’way at 83rd. (877-3190)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 15: “Smokey and the Bandit.” From Sept. 16: “MacArthur.”
Theatre 2: “One on One.”
Theatre 3: “Suspiria.”

New Yorker, B’way at 88th. (TR 4-9189)
“The Kentucky Fried Movie.”

Olympia, B’way at 107th. (865-8128)
Through Sept. 20: “The Deep” and “Fun with Dick and Jane.”
From Sept. 21: “The Island of Dr. Moreau” and “Futureworld.”

REVIVAL HOUSES

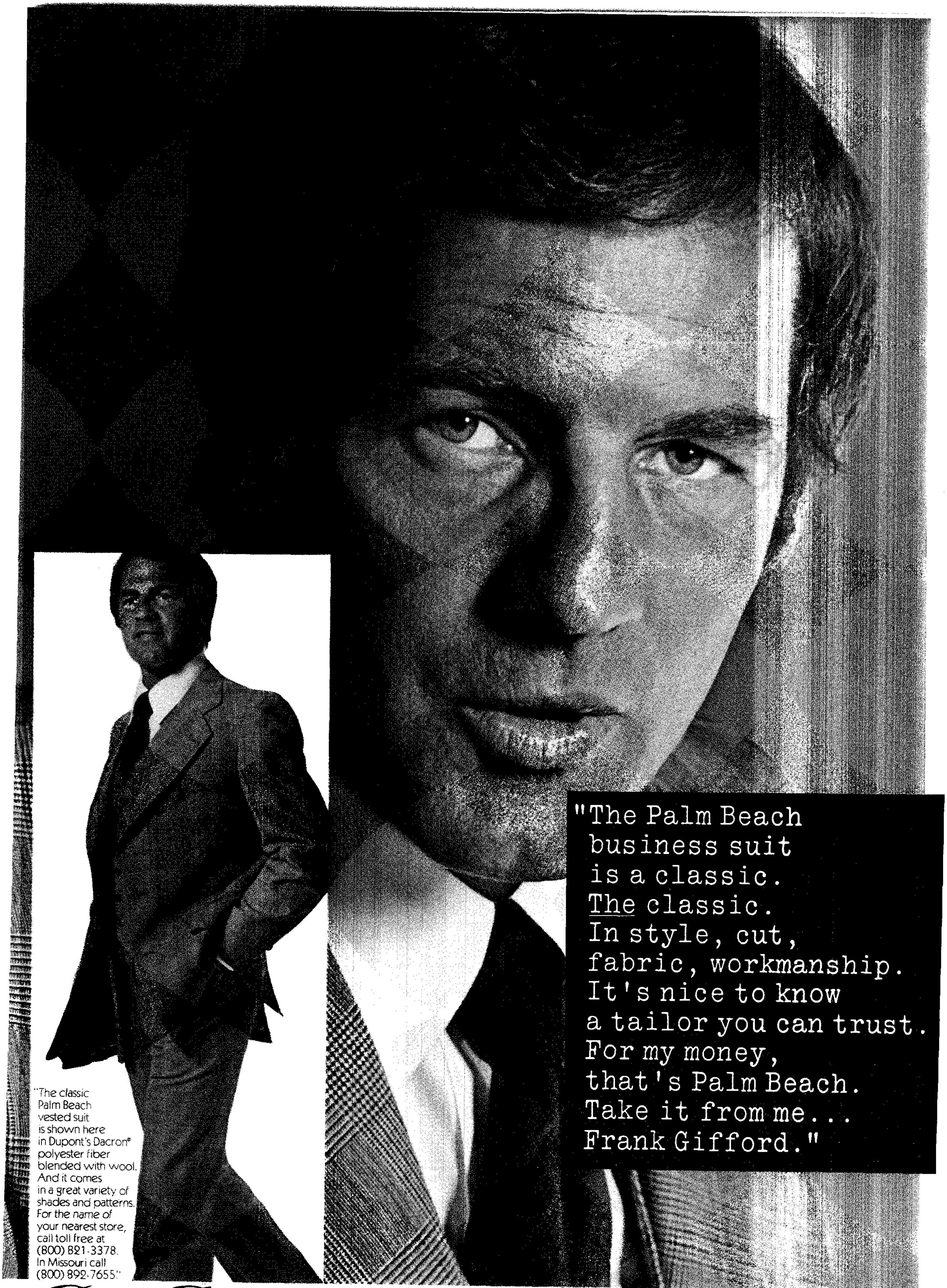
(These theatres are showing revivals exclusively, and for abbreviated runs. For reasons of space, or lack of it, only the films marked with a dagger are described in our “In Brief” section, further along.)

Bleecker St. Cinema, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Through Sept. 15: “Zorba the Greek” (1964), directed by Michael Cacoyannis, with Anthony Quinn and Alan Bates; and “Salvatore Giuliano” (1961), in Italian, directed by Francesco Rosi.
Sept. 16-17: “Death in Venice” (†); and “Tristana” (1970), in Spanish, directed by Luis Buñuel, with Catherine Deneuve and Fernando Rey.
Sept. 18-19: “Bedazzled” (†); and “And Now for Something Completely Different” (1972), selected skits from the BBC-TV series “Monty Python’s Flying Circus.”
Sept. 20: “Feet First” (1930), directed by, and with, Harold Lloyd; and “The Three Ages” (1923), directed by, and with, Buster Keaton.
Sept. 21-22: “Lawrence of Arabia” (1962), directed by David Lean, with Peter O’Toole, Alec Guinness, Omar Sharif, José Ferrer, and Anthony Quinn.

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. at 57th. (757-2131)
Sept. 14: “Siegfried” (1924), a German silent film, directed by Fritz Lang; and “M” (1932), in German, directed by Fritz Lang, with Peter Lorre.
Sept. 15: “Juliet of the Spirits” (1965), in Italian, directed by Federico Fellini, with Giulietta Masina; and “The White Sheik” (1951), in Italian, directed by Federico Fellini, with Alberto Sordi.
Sept. 16: “Dr. Strangelove” (1964), directed by Stanley Kubrick, with Peter Sellers, George C. Scott, and Sterling Hayden; and “The Mouse That Roared.” (†)
Sept. 17: “Death in Venice” (†) and “Mahler.” (†)
Sept. 18: “Under Milk Wood” (†) and “The Taming of the Shrew.” (†)
Sept. 19: “The Assassination of Trotsky” (†) and “Accident.” (†)
Sept. 20: “Compulsion” (†) and “In Cold Blood.” (†)
Sept. 21: “Sisters of the Gion” (1936) and “Women of the Night” (1948), both films in Japanese, directed by Kenji Mizoguchi.
Sept. 22: “Harry & Tonto” (1974), directed by Paul Mazursky, with Art Carney; and “Next Stop, Greenwich Village” (1976), directed by Paul Mazursky, with Shelley Winters, Lenny Baker, Ellen Greene, Christopher Walken, and Antonio Fargas.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through Sept. 15: “Tropic of Cancer” (1970), directed by Joseph Strick, with Rip Torn; and “Coming Apart” (1969), directed by Milton Moses Ginsberg, with Rip Torn, Viveca Lindfors, and Sally Kirkland.
Sept. 16-17: “The Producers” (†) and “The Twelve Chairs.” (†)
Sept. 18-19: “Romeo and Juliet” (1968), directed by Franco Zeffirelli, with Leonard Whiting and Olivia Hussey; and “Brother Sun, Sister Moon” (1973), directed by Franco Zeffirelli, with Graham Faulkner as Francis of Assisi.
Sept. 20: “Steppenwolf” (1974), directed by Fred Haines, with Max von Sydow and Dominique Sanda; and “Siddhartha” (1973), directed by Conrad Rooks, with Shashi Kapoor.
Sept. 21-22: “Fellini’s Casanova” (1977), directed by Federico Fellini, with Donald Sutherland; and “8½” (1963), in Italian, directed by Federico Fellini, with Marcello Mastroianni, Anouk Aimée, Sandra Milo, and Claudia Cardinale.

Regency, B’way at 67th. (724-3700)
Through Sept. 17: “Singin’ in the Rain” (1952), directed by Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen, with Mr. Kelly, Debbie Reynolds, Donald O’Connor, and Jean Hagen; and “An American in Paris” (1951), directed by Vincente Minnelli, with Gene Kelly, Leslie Caron, Nina Foch, and Oscar Levant.
Sept. 18-20: “Mildred Pierce” (1945), directed by Michael Curtiz, with Joan Crawford, Jack Carson, Zachary Scott, and Ann Blyth; and “The Old Maid.” (†)
From Sept. 21: “The Little Foxes” (†); and “Queen Bee” (1955), directed by



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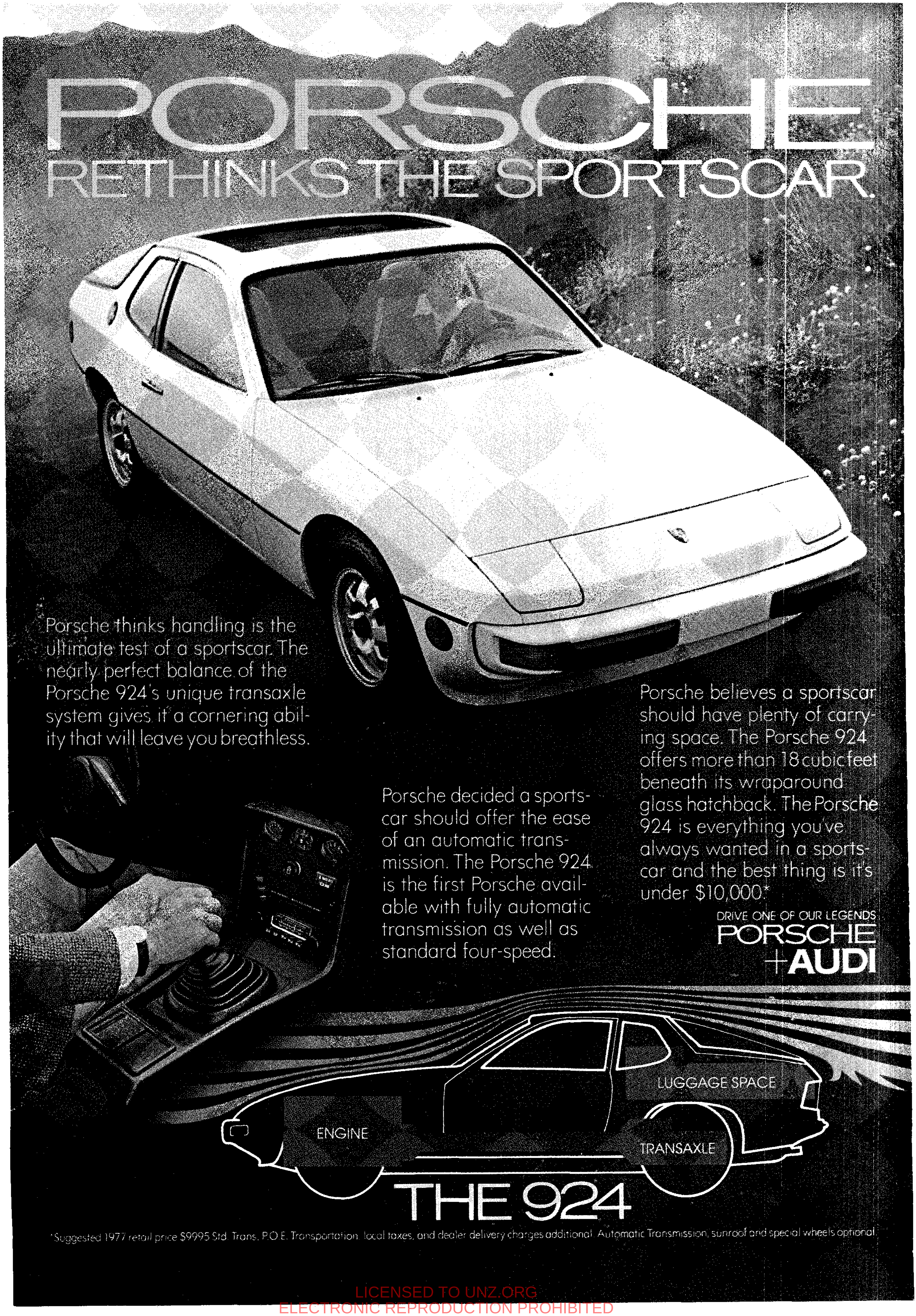

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Ranald MacDougall, with Joan Crawford, Barry Sullivan, Betsy Palmer, and John Ireland.

THALIA, B'way at 95th. (222-3370)

Through Sept. 20: "By the Blood of Others." (†)

Sept. 21-22: "A Nous la Liberté" (†) and "Pépé le Moko." (†)

THEATRE 80 ST. MARKS, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Through Sept. 15: "Imitation of Life" (1934), directed by John Stahl, with Claudette Colbert, Warren William, Ned Sparks, and Louise Beavers; and "Madame X" (1966), directed by David Lowell Rich, with Lana Turner, Keir Dullea, John Forsythe, Ricardo Montalban, and Burgess Meredith.

Sept. 16-17: "Bulldog Drummond in Africa" (1938), directed by Louis King, with John Howard; and "Bulldog Drummond's Secret Police" (1938), directed by James Hogan, with John Howard.

Sept. 18-19: "Three Smart Girls" (†) and "It Started with Eve." (†)

Sept. 20: "The Wild Party" (†); and "Dangerous Curves" (1929), directed by Lothar Mendes, with Clara Bow and Richard Arlen.

Sept. 21-22: "Ladies of Leisure" (†) and "Miracle Woman." (†)

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

ROY AND NIUTA TITUS AUDITORIUM, Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (956-7078)—Sept. 15 at 2:30: "Back Street" (1961), directed by David Miller, with Susan Hayward, Vera Miles, and John Gavin.... ¶ Sept. 15 at 6: "Back Street" (1941), directed by Robert Stevenson, with Charles Boyer and Margaret Sullavan.... ¶ Sept. 15 at 8:30 and Sept. 16 at 2:30: "Back Street" (1932), directed by John M. Stahl, with Irene Dunne and John Boles.... ¶ Sept. 16 at 6: "Revolt of the Fisherman" (1934), in Russian, directed by Erwin Piscator; English and Danish subtitles.... ¶ Sept. 17 at noon: "The Phantom of the Opera" (1925), directed by Rupert Julian, with Lon Chaney and Mary Philbin; music track on film.... ¶ Sept. 17 at 2:30: "The Phantom of the Opera" (1943), directed by Arthur Lubin, with Nelson Eddy and Claude Rains.... ¶ Sept. 17 at 5: "The Climan" (1944), directed by George Waggner, with Boris Karloff and Gale Sondergaard.... ¶ Sept. 18 at noon: "The Mummy" (1932), directed by Karl Freund, with Boris Karloff, Zita Johann, and David Manners.... ¶ Sept. 18 at 2:30: "Hired Wife" (1940), directed by William A. Seiter, with Rosalind Russell and Brian Aherne.... ¶ Sept. 18 at 5: "A Nous la Liberté" (1932), in French, directed by René Clair, with Raymond Cordy and Henri Marchand; a few English subtitles.... ¶ Sept. 19 at noon: A program of three short films.... ¶ Sept. 19 at 2:30: "Argentine Nights" (1940), directed by Albert S. Rogell, with the Ritz Brothers and the Andrews Sisters.... ¶ Sept. 19 at 6: A program of the Universal Studio serials, including episodes from "Pirate Treasure" (1934) and "The Vanishing Shadow" (1934).... ¶ Sept. 20 at noon: A program of three short films.... ¶ Sept. 20 at 2:30: "China Express" (1929), a Russian silent film, directed by Ilya Trauberg, no English inter-titles; and "Arsenal" (1929), a Russian silent film, directed by Alexander Dovzhenko, English inter-titles. ... ¶ Sept. 20 at 6: "Three Kids and a Queen" (1935), directed by Edward Ludwig, with May Robson and Frankie Darro.... ¶ Sept. 22 at 2:30: "Diamond Jim" (1935), directed by Edward Sutherland, with Edward Arnold and Jean Arthur.... ¶ Sept. 22 at 6: "The Rage of Paris" (1938), directed by Henry Koster, with Danielle Darrieux and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.... ¶ Sept. 22 at 8:30: "The Phantom Bullet" (1926), directed by Clifford S. Smith, with Hoot Gibson; and "Spurs" (1930), directed by Reaves Eason, with Hoot Gibson. (A limited number of tickets are available, but only to those applying for them in person at the museum after 11 on the day of the showing.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM, 945 Madison Ave., at 75th St.—Starting Sept. 17: "Revolve," a video film by Nancy Holt. Showings at noon, 1:30, 3, and 4:30 (plus 6:15 and 8 on Tuesday evening). Call desk (794-0630) for ticket information. Closed Mondays.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 80 Wooster St. (226-0010)—Programs by Brakhage, Anger, Buckner, Breer, Broughton, Peterson, and others. Showings Sept. 15-16 at 7 and 9; Sept. 17 at 2:30, 7, and 9; Sept. 18 at 8; Sept. 20 at 7; and Sept. 21-22 at 7 and 9.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN THESE PAGES DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

ACCIDENT (1967)—Joseph Losey and his scenarist, Harold Pinter, use sexual desperation amid the beauty of Oxford in summertime to make our flesh crawl. A clever comedy of depravity—uneven, unsatisfying, but with virtuoso passages of calculated meanness. As a weakling philosophy don, Dirk Bogarde goes through his middle-aged-frustration specialty brilliantly. Stanley Baker is properly swinish, and the ladies include Vivien Merchant, and Delphine Seyrig as a dumb blonde. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Sept. 19.)

THE ADVENTURES OF ROBINSON CRUSOE (1954)—Luis Buñuel's color version of the Defoe novel is free of that deadly solicitude that usually kills off classics. The film is a simple, unsentimental account of Defoe's basic themes: a man alone face to face with nature; then a man terribly alone, unable to face lack of love and friendship; and finally, after the lacerations of desire, a man ludicrously alone. Buñuel used Dan O'Herlihy, a fine actor with a beautiful voice, and photographed him in the jungle of Manzanillo, near Acapulco. In the delirium sequence, Buñuel is the same startling director who made film history. When Crusoe shouts to the hills in order to hear the companionable echo, and when he rushes to the sea in desperate longing for a ship, loneliness is brought, in sudden shocks, to a pitch of awe and terror. Crusoe's eventual meeting with Friday (James Fernandez) changes the tone to irony. (Renoir Cinema; Sept. 19-21.)

AGUIRRE, THE WRATH OF GOD (1972)—Werner Herzog's fine film about a sixteenth-century quest for a Peruvian El Dorado. The leader of the conquistadores is Aguirre, blazing-eyed and severe, with delusions of demagogy. In German. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/11/77.) (Cinema Studio.)

ALLEGRO NON TROPPO—An animated film by Bruno Bozzetto. In Italian. (Little Carnegie; starting Sept. 15.)

A NOUS LA LIBERTÉ (1931)—René Clair's imaginative social comedy on the mechanization of modern life begins with a man who escapes from prison and then builds a business that turns into a prison. (Clair's central character was based on Charles Pathé and his phonograph-and-cinema empire.) Paced to Georges Auric's memorable score. In French. (Thalia; Sept. 21-22.)

THE ASSASSINATION OF TROTSKY (1972)—Not for anyone who knows, or cares, anything about Leon Trotsky. With Richard Burton as a stuffed-shirt Trotsky, and Alain Delon as an angel-of-death assassin; directed by Joseph Losey. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Sept. 19.)

THE BAD NEWS BEARS IN BREAKING TRAINING—Highly likable sequel to "The Bad News Bears," with the crew of unruly and matchlessly mismatched kids caught up in a ballgame in Houston that they do well at in spite of a lot of butterflies. Jackie Earle Haley, smoking hard to get around the cops' suspicion that he hasn't got a driver's license, is fine, and graceful at playing the film's characteristic born dissident. (86th St. East; through Sept. 15.)

BEDAZZLED (1967)—A funny demonstration of the folly of striking bargains with the Devil. Directed by Stanley Donen, and starring Dudley Moore, Peter Cook, and Eleanor Bron. (Bleecker St. Cinema; Sept. 18-19.)

BLACK AND WHITE IN COLOR—Directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud; at first anecdotal, then ironic and sharp and charming. The scene is West Africa in 1915, when the local French and German garrisons learn that they are at war. The hero is a good-looking, decisive French geographer called Hubert (Jacques Spiesser), who turns a tribe into a pukka regiment. In French. (5/23/77) (Paris.)

A BRIDGE TOO FAR—A film too long. Inaccurate, to boot. About Arnhem in the Second World War, with a list of stars of whom only Laurence Olivier is worth your ticket money. (6/20/77) (Greenwich; through Sept. 20.)

BY THE BLOOD OF OTHERS—With Mariangela Melato and Yves Beneyton, directed by Marc Simenon. In French. (Reviewed in this issue.) (R.K.O. 86th St. Twin 2, and Quad Cinema.... ¶ Thalia; through Sept. 20.)

CHAC—A film about Mayans seeking rain in a drought. The subtitled speech—there is not much of it, as usual in solemn ethnological films—is in Cariban, Mayan, and Tzeltal. Rolando Klein directed this extra-beautiful, subnormal-minded picture, with a non-professional cast, apart from an extremely well-trained midget from Mexico City. (9/5/77) (Waverly.)

COMPULSION (1959)—Dean Stockwell, Bradford Dillman, and Orson Welles have joined forces in representing a pair of killers and a defense attorney in this reënactment of the Loeb-Leopold case. Directed by Richard Fleischer. No compulsion to go. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Sept. 20.)

CRÍA!—A moving Spanish film, set in Madrid, with Ana Torrent as a nine-year-old called Ana. Her mother and her adult self are both played with great beauty by Geraldine Chaplin. Carlos Saura directed, and wrote the screenplay himself. Surrounded by deaths—of her mother, her father (discovered by her in bed with her mother's best friend), her guinea pig—the child has a delicate sense of play; there is a marvellous scene in which she and her sisters dress up and make up and talk as they imagine grownups do when alone together. In Spanish. (6/6/77) (Art.... ¶ Gramercy; starting Sept. 21.)

THE CRIMINAL LIFE OF ARCHIBALDO DE LA CRUZ (1955)—Only intermittently amusing black comedy, made in Mexico by Buñuel. Directed rather indifferently, though the story has a Buñuelian perversity. It's about a man whose attempts to commit murder are constantly frustrated by the deaths of his intended victims. In Spanish. (Renoir Cinema; Sept. 15-18.)

DEATH IN VENICE (1971)—Visconti's film of the great Thomas Mann story of 1911, with Dirk Bogarde as Aschenbach, turned by Visconti from an author into a composer based on Mahler. The film is an odd mixture of unearthly beauty and almighty carrying-on, with something suffocatingly literal made of the purity of Aschenbach's love for the fourteen-year-old whom he meets at the Hôtel des Bains on the Lido. Many, many things here are wonderful, though. (Bleecker St. Cinema; Sept. 16-17.... ¶ Carnegie Hall Cinema; Sept. 17.)

THE DEEP—Don't plunge. From the Peter Benchley novel, with Robert Shaw, Jacqueline Bisset, and Nick Nolte; directed by Peter Yates. (7/4/77) (72nd Street East, and Olympia; through Sept. 20.)

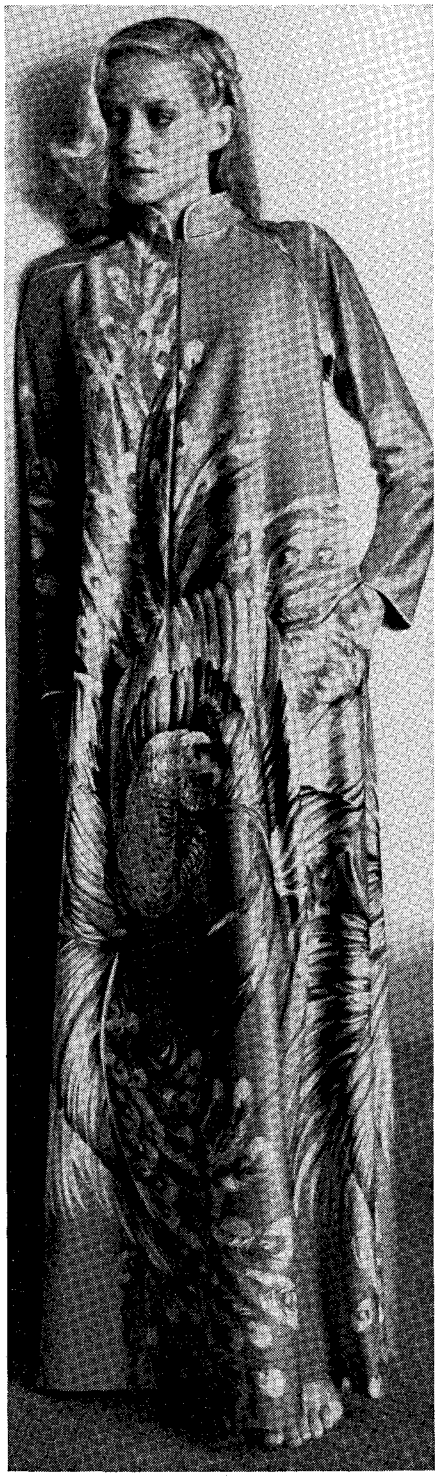
FANTASTIC ANIMATION FESTIVAL—A film made up of sixteen award-winning animated short subjects. Some are pretentious—about mushroom clouds or alienation, in the film-festival style—some are plain groggy, and a few are genuinely witty. (Paramount.... ¶ 8th St. Playhouse; through Sept. 15.... ¶ D.W. Griffith; through Sept. 20.)

THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL—A spoof of low-budget porno films and the musical comedies of the thirties and forties, with Stephen Nathan, Cindy Williams, and Bruce Kimmel; directed by Mr. Kimmel and Mark Haggard. R-rated. (68th St. Playhouse; through Sept. 17.... ¶ Quad Cinema; starting Sept. 21.)

FUN WITH DICK AND JANE—A nitwit mixture of counterculture politics, madcap comedy, and toilet humor. George Segal and Jane Fonda are Dick and Jane of the children's primers, grown up, married, and living beyond their means in a suburban-palatial L.A. dream house; when he loses his executive job they turn to robbery. Excruciatingly badly directed by Ted Kotcheff. (2/28/77) (Olympia; through Sept. 20.)

FUTUREWORLD (1976)—Futurebunk. With Peter Fonda, Blythe Danner, and Arthur Hill; directed by Richard T. Heffron. (8/30/77) (Olympia; starting Sept. 21.)

LA GRANDE BOURGEOISE—A noble, beautiful piece of work by Mauro Bolognini, set in the Italy



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

of 1897. The story has the quality of a fable. The Countess (Catherine Deneuve), daughter of the famed and powerful house of Murri, is married to a boorish doctor but is in love with her brother (played by Giancarlo Giannini). The Murris are rich Socialists; they excite the rage and envy of poorer fellow-Socialists and traditional monarchists alike. In French and Italian. (8/8/77) (Beekman.)

GREASED LIGHTNING—Richard Pryor as Wendell Scott, the only successful black racing-car driver in the South thirty years ago, playing a pop-eyed Uncle Tom for Uncle Toms in a caustically funny performance. Eat dust, bump fenders, burn rubber; eat white insults, spit them out, burn up the past. The picture, produced by Hannah Weinstein (producer of "Claudine") and directed by Michael Schultz, strikes one as a traditional caricature of the underdog until one watches it more closely and sees its vigor and intensity. (8/22/77) (St. Marks Cinema; through Sept. 20.)

IN COLD BLOOD (1967)—How two punks murdered four decent people and paid for their atrocious crime with their lives. Adapted by Richard Brooks from the Capote original. With Scott Wilson and Robert Blake. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Sept. 20.)

I NEVER PROMISED YOU A ROSE GARDEN—Anthony Page treats the topic of a pretty, schizophrenic girl (Kathleen Quinlan) with charity and distress. Bibi Andersson plays—marvellously—the therapist who works with the girl in the frightened margins of her life, which is hedged with demons. The "cure" is not complete, but we were never promised a rose garden. (8/8/77) (Cinema I.)

IN THE REALM OF THE SENSES—With Eiko Matsuda and Tatsuya Fuji, directed by Nagisa Oshima. In Japanese. (Plaza.)

THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU—With Burt Lancaster and Michael York, directed by Don Taylor. (Olympia; starting Sept. 21.)

IT STARTED WITH EVE (1941)—Deanna Durbin as a waif who gets involved with the family of a saintly old millionaire (Charles Laughton), who plays Cupid and schemes to have his grandson marry her. And you need the stomach of a saint to sit through it. Joe Pasternak produced, Henry Koster directed, and Norman Krasna was one of the writers. (Durbin does only some incidental singing.) (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 18-19.)

LE JOLI MAI (1963)—In May, 1962, the month the war ended in Algeria, the French documentarian Chris Marker recorded a series of casual, impromptu interviews with Parisians and discovered that they would rather think of anything but politics. This Anglo-American version of his film is marred by a commentary spoken in almost mockingly accented English by Simone Signoret, but Marker's distinctively lyric and generous approach to his subject keeps the picture afloat—though just barely. (Renoir Cinema; Sept. 22.)

THE KENTUCKY FRIED MOVIE—With David Zucker, Jim Abrahams, and Jerry Zucker; directed by John Landis. (Eastside Cinema, Quad Cinema, and New Yorker.)

LADIES OF LEISURE (1930)—Though she came from the theatre, Barbara Stanwyck seemed to have an intuitive understanding of the fluid physical movements that work best on camera; perhaps she had been an unusually "natural" actress even onstage. This was her first big hit in the movies. Under Frank Capra's direction, she plays a tough "party" girl (euphemism for call girl) who poses for a wealthy young artist (Ralph Graves); he sees in her the spirituality that she attempts to deny. The story is a museum piece of early-talkies sentimentality, but, in a way, that only emphasizes Stanwyck's superb modernism. With Marie Prevost, Lowell Sherman, Juliette Compton, and Nance O'Neil. Beautifully lighted by the cinematographer, Joseph Walker. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 21-22.)

THE LAST REMAKE OF BEAU GESTE—Sir Hector Geste, of Geste Manor, gnashes his teeth when his nice wife bears him a beautiful daughter instead of the son he has pined for. At the Wormwood & Gall Boys Orphanage, he picks out the very lad: strong-jawed, blond, destined to grow up into Michael York, a twin wildly held to be identical to the slithery-eyed boy destined to grow up into Marty Feldman (who wrote and directed this recklessly funny film). (7/25/77) (Sutton.)

LET JOY REIGN SUPREME—With Jean-Pierre Marielle, Philippe Noiret, and Jean Rochefort; directed by Bertrand Tavernier. In French. (Reviewed in this issue.) (68th St. Playhouse; starting Sept. 18.)

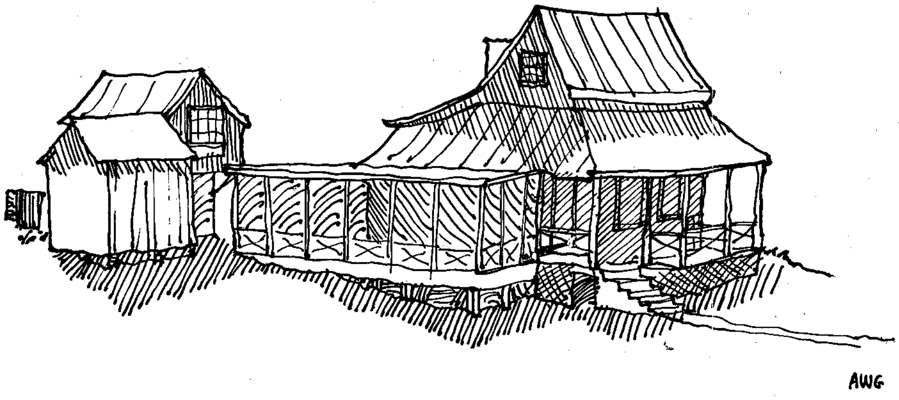
THE LITTLE FOXES (1941)—Bette Davis's tight, dry performance was probably a mistake; her Regina is so villainous that this version of Lillian Hellman's play about a Southern family of predators doesn't have the temperament and drive that Tallulah Bankhead gave it on the stage. But it's a handsome movie melodrama, well contrived and showily acted. William Wyler directed; with Herbert Marshall, Teresa Wright, Patricia Collinge, Richard Carlson, Charles Dingle, and Dan Duryea, overdoing the whinnying weakling. (Regency; starting Sept. 21.)

LITTLE MURDERS (1971)—Jules Feiffer's satirical comedy about urban decay and living between assassinations was turned into something fairly gross in its movie version, directed by Alan Arkin. Elliott Gould is the catatonic hero. (St. Marks Cinema; through Sept. 20.)

MACARTHUR—A blockbuster film that is an act of homage to egocentricity and battle hunger. Gregory Peck plays the General perfectly: his skill at reproducing the characteristics of a noisy, obtuse, brave, Red-baiting man makes the actor and subject seem uncannily matched. At West Point, stripped of his command, the General has some moving moments: you feel that without war this authoritarian man is made inert and void. (7/11/77) (86th St. East, Guild, and Loews 83rd Triplex; starting Sept. 16.)

MAHLER (1976)—Ken Russell's lurid love for music is well-known: sober and good in his early days at the BBC, where he worked on film biographies of Delius, Elgar, and Richard Strauss, he has lately been producing stinkers, in pieces about Tchaikovsky, Liszt, and Mahler. Mahler is well played by Robert Powell, though he stares through us rather like a medium in a trance. Composing music is not a trance; it's hard work, like plumbing. (4/26/76) (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Sept. 17.)

MIRACLE WOMAN (1931)—Barbara Stanwyck gives a peerless performance as a young evangelist—a girl from a religious background who is taken over by a corny promoter (Sam Hardy) and is developed into a big-time shear-the-sheep phenomenon, with her own church. Frank Capra directed this fictionalized version of the life of Aimee Semple McPherson. It was softened by a mawkish love story: the heroine is redeemed through her unselfish love for a blind aviator (David Manners, God help us all). But it's still a beauty, well staged and handsomely lighted



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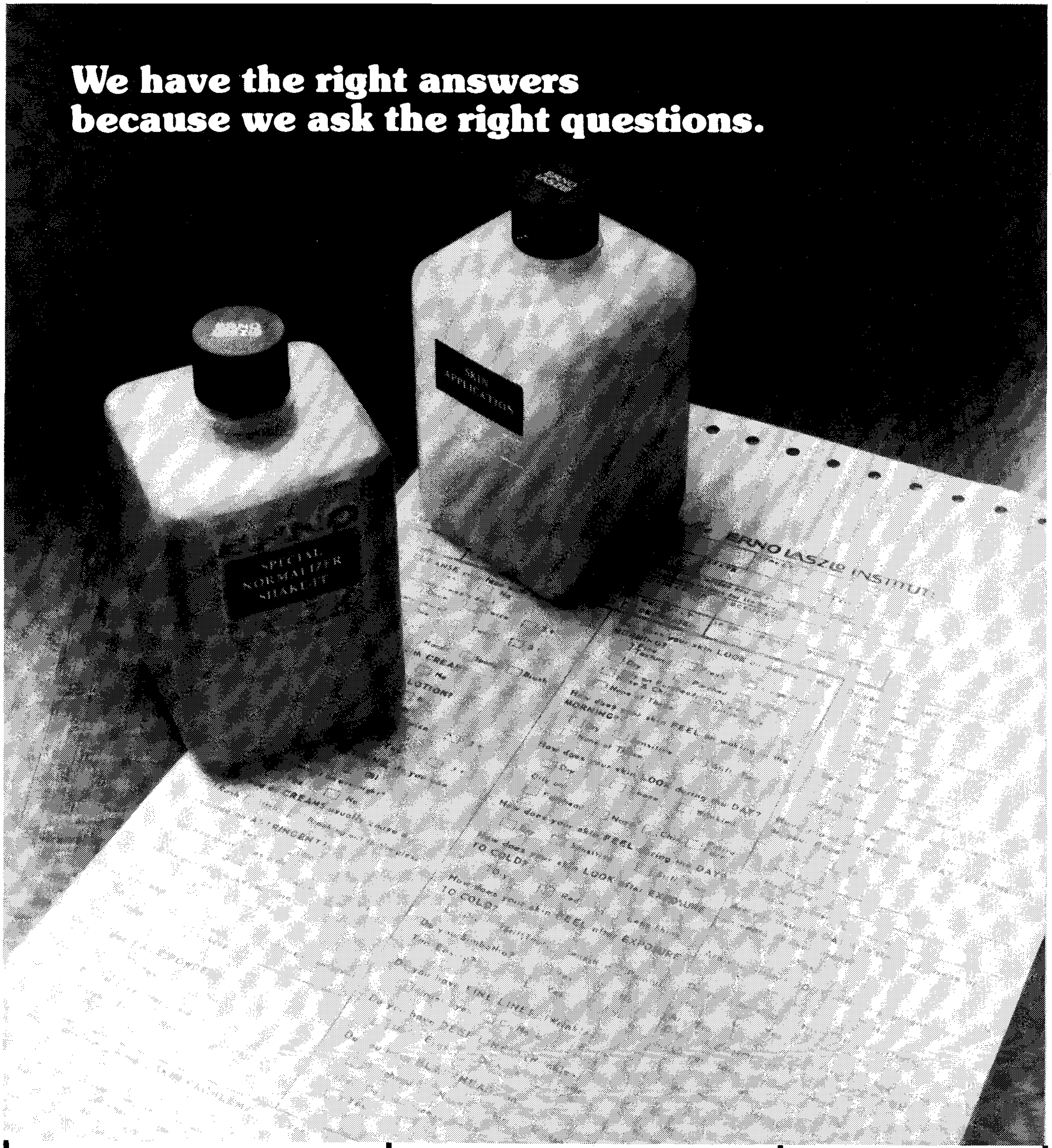

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(Joseph Walker was the cinematographer), and with some intermittent good writing; the screenplay is by Jo Swerling, from the play "Bless You Sister," by John Meehan and Robert Riskin. With Beryl Mercer and Russell Hopton. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 21-22.)

The Mouse That Roared (1959)—Peter Sellers made his first big impression on American moviegoers playing a field marshal, an imposingly big-bosomed grand duchess, and the Prime Minister of Grand Fenwick in this English comedy about a minuscule mythical country that declares war on the United States, expecting to be quickly defeated and thus eligible for the cash benefits of rehabilitation. Twenty Grand Fenwickians, dressed in armor and toting bows and arrows, set sail for New York in a ramshackle tug. That's about as far as the comedy gets. The film abandons its small, amusing idea and goes off on a wearying tangent about a scientist (David Kossoff) with a big bomb and an ingénue-daughter (Jean Seberg), but it was hugely and inexplicably popular. Jack Arnold directed. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Sept. 16.)

Nasty Habits—At its best, a movie of high wit and inspired silliness. Adapted from "The Abbess of Crewe," Muriel Spark's 1974 Watergate travesty set in a convent, the film features a coiffed little wolf pack—Glenda Jackson as Nixon, Geraldine Page and Anne Jackson as Haldeman and Ehrlichman, and, in an inspired bit of casting, Sandy Dennis as their flunky, John Dean. As Kissinger, Melina Mercouri doesn't help much, but the scenarist, Robert Enders, has added a Gerald Ford figure—Anne Meara, who is such a brassy, good-humored top banana that everything she does is funny. The script tapers off toward topicality and obviousness, but Michael Lindsay-Hogg's directing has a balmy gracefulness to it. With Edith Evans. (2/21/77) (Playboy; through Sept. 20.)

Obsession (1976)—An *hommage* to Hitchcock, made by Brian De Palma. The inspiring original is Hitchcock's "Vertigo," in which James Stewart is an ex-dick confused over whether Kim Novak is a suicide (as he thought) or is beguilingly alive in a new identity. "Obsession," which believes in mystery rather than in Hitchcock's surprises, is about a rich New Orleans businessman (Cliff Robertson), who suffers the kidnapping of his wife (Geneviève Bujold) and his nine-year-old daughter (Wanda Blackman). Years later, gray-haired, he falls in love, in Italy, with a girl restoring a painting in the Italian church where he first fell in love with his wife. The girl is played, of course, by Geneviève Bujold. Who is she? A hallucination? The question leaves us cold, because it lacks Hitchcock's scrupulous matter-of-factness. (8/2/76) (8th St. Playhouse; starting Sept. 16.)

The Old Maid (1939)—Bette Davis doesn't have much talent for masochism. When she attempts the sacrificial-mother roles that were meat and potatoes to many a trouper, she builds the character so painstakingly that she loses her flare and turns mealy. In this costume picture, taken from Zoë Atkin's Pulitzer Prize play version of the Edith Wharton novel, she's an unwed mother, forced to turn over her infant daughter to—of all people—Miriam Hopkins, as her married cousin, and then she must stand by and watch as her daughter grows up treating her contemptuously as a spinster aunt. Full of tight-lipped renunciation, she gives what might be called a creditable performance; the picture isn't bad, but it trudges along and never becomes exciting. Edmund Goulding directed smoothly, from Casey Robinson's screenplay. With Jane Bryan, George Brent, James Stephenson, Louise Fazenda, Jerome Cowan, William Lundigan, and Donald Crisp. (Regency; Sept. 18-20.)

One on One—With Robby Benson and Annette O'Toole, directed by Lamont Johnson. (34th St. East, Fine Arts, and Loews 83rd Triplex.)

The Other Side of Midnight—A fatuous, money-spinning film from a fatuous, money-spinning book about a girl called Noelle Page (Marie-France Pisier), who rises from lowish life in Marseilles to become the most famous and best-dressed film star in France. The dialogue and the plot are so dull that the film chiefly

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embeds itself in the memory as a conversation between women's clothes. (7/11/77) (Coronet.)

Outrageous!—A shock-the-bourgeois film from Canada about a friendship between a schizophrenic girl and a homosexual who is expert at drag entertainment. A cheap and false analogy is made between the states of the two characters, and it doesn't pass muster by miles. The outrageous thing about this crass picture is the lines of patient people waiting in front of the movie house to see a piece of work that leans on giggles, not laughter, and easy weeping, not sensibility. (9/12/77) (Cinema II.)

Pardon Mon Affaire—A soubrette of a movie, about a long-faced and very accident-prone Lothario (Jean Rochefort). Directed by Yves Robert, who made "The Tall Blond Man with One Black Shoe." Sabotaged sometimes by coquetry, but its high spirits save it. In French. (8/8/77) (Baronet.)

Pépé le Moko (1937)—Superb entertainment. A classic romantic tragedy of the thirties, and one of the most compelling of all French films, yet seen by few Americans because it was remade in Hollywood two years later as "Algiers," starring Charles Boyer and "introducing" Hedy Lamarr. "Algiers" was so closely copied from "Pépé le Moko" that look-alikes were cast in many of the roles, and some sequences were followed shot by shot, but "Algiers" is glamorous pop that doesn't compare to the original, directed by Julien Duvivier and starring Jean Gabin as the gangster who finds love but can't find his freedom. No one who saw "Pépé" is likely to forget the scene in which the homesick-for-Paris Gabin looks at a Métro ticket and recites the names of the stations. With Mireille Balin, Marcel Dalio, Gaston Modot, Gabriel Gabrio, and Charpin. In French. (Thalia; Sept. 21-22.)

The Producers (1968)—Satire of the theatre, with Zero Mostel as a producer who sells twenty-five thousand per cent of a play, intending to produce a flop so that he won't have to pay the backers anything. Some of it is very funny, but Mel Brooks, who wrote and directed, doesn't develop the ideas. With Dick Shawn and Gene Wilder, whose whining, strangled-voice bit is almost a shtick of genius. (Cinema Village; Sept. 16-17.)

The River and Death (1954)—Directed by Luis Buñuel, in Mexico. In Spanish. (Renoir Cinema; Sept. 14.)

The Savage Is Loose (1974)—George C. Scott, Trish Van Devere, and John David Carson, as their son, are shipwrecked on a jungle island, and so is the audience. Agonizing. Scott directed. (59th St. East.)

The Sensual Man—Written and directed by Marco Vicario, with Giancarlo Giannini as an Italian growing old in the grip of a ravaging sensuality. The most touching character is actually his father, the odd man out in a noisy family; he says on his deathbed to his son, about the relatives waiting outside the bedroom door for the excitement of last rites, "Don't let them shout." The agony of the hero himself is rather limply characterized. Why such misery, forcing himself to chase whores and breaking his heart in his search for a good and simple girl? In Italian. (8/22/77) (Little Carnegie; Sept. 14.)

Smokey and the Bandit—With Burt Reynolds, Sally Field, Jerry Reed, and Jackie Gleason; directed by Hal Needham. (Loews 83rd Triplex; through Sept. 15.)

Sorcerer—William Friedkin's remake of Clouzot's "The Wages of Fear," about four men at the end of their endurance in Latin America. In spite of the title, the quality of the film is not metaphysical but lies in the tension of the gesture of defiance by the four men, who have nothing real to lose, though capitalist society dependent on labor has trained them to think their null existences of value. After a wretched hour of unnecessary opening plot, the sad thriller is set. See the Clouzot version in preference. (7/18/77) (8th St. Playhouse; starting Sept. 16.)

The Spy Who Loved Me—This time around in the James Bond cycle, Roger Moore is 007, and his girl-object, a coldly luscious Russian woman spy, is Barbara Bach. Much ingenuity of blood lust. Gone are the days of the early Bond pictures, with their vivacity and circus

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hucksterism. Directed by Lewis Gilbert. (8/8/77) (Columbia I, Columbia II, and Loews Ciné. . . . ¶ Greenwich; starting Sept. 21, tentative.)

STAR WARS—A film, written and directed by George Lucas (of "American Graffiti"), about an interstellar war in a galaxy inhabited by tiny, chattering, evil beings, by Tenniel creatures of high individuality (a henna-dyed wolf-man, snakes with the look of mathematicians), by a gold-plated robot, and by a computer that looks like a mixture of hair-dryer and mailbox. Witty and fun, with spectacular optical effects. (6/13/77) (Murray Hill, and Loews Orpheum.)

STROSZEK—Werner Herzog, the West German who wrote and directed this wonderful film, describes it as a ballad. Stroszek, played by Bruno S., feels himself like a castaway going round and round forever—merry-go-round or mill wheel, he doesn't know which. In a key scene, early in the film, a befriending doctor tells Stroszek that he doesn't know how to look after himself, and then shows him a premature baby who, like Stroszek, will be all right, given a little help. A masterwork. In German and English. (7/25/77) (Quad Cinema; through Sept. 20.)

SUSPIRIA—With Jessica Harper, directed by Dario Argento. (R.K.O. 86th St. Twin 1, and Loews 83rd Triplex.)

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW (1967)—The director, Franco Zeffirelli, has loaded this light skiff of a comedy to the gunwales, and it has sunk. Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton go down with the skiff most valiantly. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Sept. 18.)

THREE SMART GIRLS (1937)—Deanna Durbin's début picture, in which the happy, toothsome fourteen-year-old soprano conquered audiences and rescued Universal Pictures. And you can see why. The surrounding cast of solid pros (Binnie Barnes, Alice Brady, Ray Milland, Charles Winninger, Mischa Auer, Ernest Cossart) keeps grinning. The picture is idiotically turned on to happiness, but it isn't boring. Joe Pasternak produced; Henry Koster directed. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 18-19.)

3 WOMEN—Robert Altman's dream film about three women whose identities merge, one into another, and flow together. Shelley Duvall plays a beautiful know-it-all girl who is an attendant in a health spa for the aged. Sissy Spacek plays the novice she breaks in, and Janice Rule plays a silent artist who paints lunging profile figures on the sides of swimming pools. (4/18/77) (Gramercy; through Sept. 20.)

THE TWELVE CHAIRS (1970)—Mel Brooks shows his affection for the innocent nuttiness of earlier periods of comedy in this story about three men (Frank Langella, Dom DeLuise, Ron Moody) searching for a fortune hidden in a chair, but the whole enterprise is rather forlorn. Not bad, really—just so-so. (Cinema Village; Sept. 16-17.)

UNDER MILK WOOD (1973)—An affectionate and beautiful reading of the Dylan Thomas play for voices, with a fairly modest visual accompaniment. Andrew Sinclair adapted and directed. Richard Burton is the principal speaker and performer; with Peter O'Toole, Elizabeth Taylor, Victor Spinetti, Glynis Johns, and Vivien Merchant. Seeing the people seems to clarify and set the play in one's mind, though one may lose the unkempt luxuriance of Thomas's vision, and perhaps also lose the freedom not to think of the voices in terms of characters—the freedom not to visualize the material. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Sept. 18.)

THE WILD PARTY (1929)—Clara Bow, in her first talkie, set in a women's college; she's a student and Fredric March is a young professor. It's silly stuff, yet charming. Clara Bow was for her period something like what Marilyn Monroe was for hers, and Bow's infantile sexuality is high-voltage; she's both repulsive and irresistible. Dorothy Arzner directed; with Joyce Compton, Jack Oakie, Shirley O'Hara, and Marceline Day. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 20.)

A WOMAN'S DECISION—With Maja Komorowska, directed by Krzysztof Zanussi. In Polish. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Cinema 3.)

YOU LIGHT UP MY LIFE—With Didi Conn, Joe Silver, and Michael Zaslow; directed by Joseph Brooks. (Loews Tower East. . . . ¶ Guild; through Sept. 15.)

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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

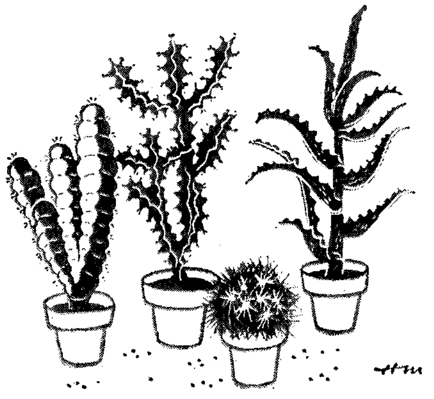
Notes and Comment

OVER a bowl of bay scallops at the Oyster Bar in his favorite railway station, Grand Central Terminal, E. M. Frimbo last week delivered himself of the following:

How to get the people out of the countryside—I guess that's the unwritten federal policy today. There are several federal agencies working on the project, but, naturally, none of them know what the others are doing, and none of them want to know. We need a new Cabinet post—Secretary of Depopulation. Remember how easy it was, in the days when we were better organized, to get the Seminoles out of Florida and into Oklahoma? That wasn't very subtle, though, so the feds are cleverer now. They're using psychology. If life in your home town is made increasingly inconvenient, maybe you can be persuaded to move to the city, where the weight-throwing voters already live. The Interstate Commerce Commission let the railways get rid of their country passenger service, sometimes for not the best of reasons. Then the bus companies, which took over from the railways, began to whittle down their service, sometimes to zero. Now the Civil Aeronautics Board lets some airlines whittle down their service, too, to zero. Suddenly, you're back in Pilgrim days. If you want to go anywhere or get anything, you do it yourself. Congress has passed a bill, called by the trade the 4-R Act, that is so cleverly worded that railways have started getting rid of thousands of miles of railway lines that still carry freight to small communities. The man who owns the factory in your little town decides to close down and move out. Your Chamber of Commerce can't find a customer for the factory, because no customer can get the freight service he wants. So the people who worked in the factory move to jobs elsewhere. Then your community decides to raise enough money to take over the branch line that serves it. One way to do this is to float a municipal-bond issue, which traditionally pays tax-exempt interest—a device that makes the issue easier to sell. But the feds have got news of this, and the I.R.S. has ruled that an issue for this particular purpose is *not* tax-exempt. What the government is saying is that small towns no longer pay, so get the hell out of them.

And now the Post Office. I just heard that they're starting again to close rural post offices. You know the kind of small town that had a fifth- or sixth-class post office. The postmaster set aside a corner of his general store for post-office customers, and his income as postmaster was mostly what he got for selling stamps to his clients—a simple, inexpensive, *convenient* way of giving service to everyone in the township. Now we don't care about our country cousins anymore. I've lived in a lot of little towns. Brandon, Vermont, for instance, where I holed up for a while, some time after—I admit—Thomas Davenport invented the electric motor there. I was in the household of one of the mail clerks on the local night mail train that ran between Burlington and Rutland. The mail came in from the south early every morning to our little post office, already sorted by the clerks on the train, and ready to be sent out instantly from the post office at breakfast time—mail that had been posted as far away as Washington, D.C., the afternoon before. I was learning to play the organ in the Congregational church, where the son of the family I was living with was the organist. When I was alone in the organ loft, I sometimes got away from the churchly manuals and started working out my own arrangement of "When It's Night Time Down in Burgundy"—until I got caught out one evening. As penance, I was required for a few weeks to go down to the railway station at half past nine at night on the days when Mr. Pollard, the father of the family, was working his way south from Burlington on the mail train to Rutland. Along with any letters of mine and of the family's, I carried a couple of tin buckets of food that Mrs. Pollard had cooked for him and a little parcel of clean laundry. Today, if I still lived in Brandon, where on earth could I post a letter at that hour of the evening and know that it would be on someone's desk in New York City before noon next day? In my university years, I could go down to the railway station in Princeton, New Jersey, at ten-fifteen in the evening, hand letters to the mail clerk, and know that they would be delivered in Washington, D.C., the next morning.

This was the comfortable, easy pattern of communication—at three cents a throw—all over this country until the accession to the Postmaster Generalship of Arthur E. Summerfield, under Eisenhower. The Pennsylvania Railroad, which was as naïve then about the facts of life as it was years later about its horrendous merger with the New York Central, cheerfully named one of its mail cars, in big gilt letters, after the new Postmaster, even as he was setting about the dismantlement of this marvellous system of communication begun even before the Civil War. More and more mail began going out to the airports to be flown between the big cities, and that was fine for the big cities. And more mail went to the highway truckers, and that was fine for (a) the highway truckers and (b) the people who were running the Post Office patronage system; that is, local contract helps local boy make



good. The mail car on the State of Maine Express from New York disappeared, along with the train that carried it, and my correspondent in Blue Hill, Maine, began complaining that it was taking two or three days longer for a letter to get from me to him. Well, Summerfield and his successors at last boiled the railway mail cars down to just one train—five nights a week between New York and Washington each way. It wasn't in any public timetable, and under no circumstances was it to carry passengers. But a couple of my old Pennsylvania Railroad cronies, now gone to what I hope is an extremely handsome reward, were always pleased to invite me aboard the nights they were working the train. It was an easy and early way of getting to Washington, and it cost me just a subway fare to Penn Station. I liked to get to Penn Station in plenty of time before the train departed—especially during bad weather, when, a few minutes before the train pushed off, a bunch of bags would come down the mail chute onto the platform and someone would say, "Well, where the hell do you want me to put the airmail tonight?" It was easy to spot airmail, because the mailbags that contained it were of a color not at all like the dirty gray of the standard mailbags; and the time lost while the Post Office was trucking the mail out to the nonexistent flights from Kennedy and LaGuardia and trucking it back to Penn Station was compensated for by the nimble fingerwork of the postal clerks on the train, who popped what must have been thousands of letters into this and that pigeonhole along the sides of the cars en route. So that when the train reached Baltimore or Washington, between four and five in the morning, the mail was all ready to be carted off direct to the substations in each city in time for the deliverymen to distribute it on their morning strolls. What a way to do it! Of course, it had to go. And it did: this last mail train made its final run at the end of June. Philatelists arranged to post letters on it, so that they could get the mail-car cancellation on the stamps, and the letters *were* posted—twenty-five thousand of them. I'm not sure how many of them got cancelled. I guess it was the first time the train had ever carried legal non-Post Office passengers: Amtrak, which wanted the train to keep running, had a bar car on the final southbound run. But I didn't feel like celebrating. Oh, I forgot one thing. The Post Office used to fine the railways for delivering the mail late. Perhaps we should start fining the Post Office now.

• •

Double-Double

FROM time to time, we have looked in on the Amateur Astronomers Association, a local outfit, now five hundred strong, that for fifty years has been gazing at the heavens through telescopes—usually made by some of its members—in order to view such things as moon craters, eclipses, comets, open clusters, globular clusters, and meteor showers. Not long ago, the A.A.A. inaugurated a monthly "Star Party," which takes place on the lawn in front of the Hayden Planetarium (the association has long been affiliated with the Planetarium), and which is open to anyone who wants to peer skyward. When we arrived at the Planetarium at about eight one evening recently, the sky was a cloudless cobalt, and perhaps a hundred and fifty people had begun to gather around eight or ten handmade telescopes, whose mirrors ranged from three to ten inches in diameter. Each telescope was manned by a trained member of the association, who explained to visitors what they were seeing as they looked into its eyepiece. We overheard remarks like "We'll look at the moon until the sky gets a little darker," "What are those funny bumps in the middle of the craters?," and "Uranus may be visible tonight, although it is difficult to locate, with city lighting conditions."

Before long, we began talking with a tall, slim man named Thomas Delahunty, who is on the A.A.A.'s board of directors. After discussing the differences between refracting or reflecting and catadioptric telescopes (the catadioptric ones are more complex than the others), he told us that the association breaks down rather neatly into an Observing Group and an Optical Division.

"Although there is some crossover between the two, we find that people tend to specialize in one area or the other," Mr. Delahunty said. "Members of the Observing Group want mainly to look at what's out there in space, and they sometimes refer to members of the Optical Division—in a friendly way, of course—as T.N.s, or telescope nuts. That's because there really are people who would rather build telescopes than go out and look at the stars. The association gives courses in telescope design, mirror-making, telescope assembly, and so forth, and we often have lectures by some of the most eminent astronomers in the country. We're proud of the fact that some of today's most accomplished professional astronomers began their careers by becoming members of the A.A.A. when they were youngsters."

We asked Mr. Delahunty whether the group ever encountered people who were confused about the difference between astronomy and astrology.

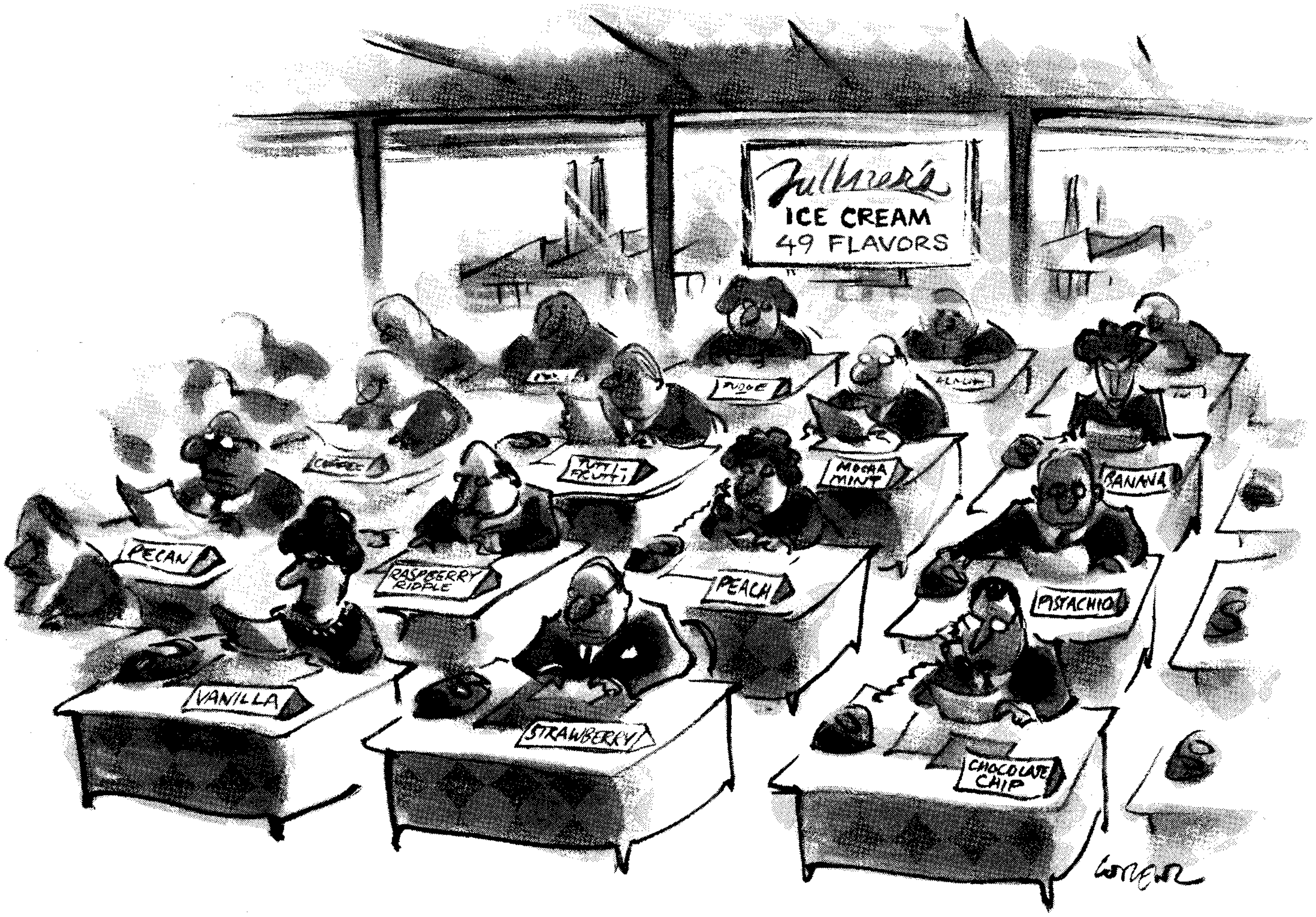
"Alas, yes," he said. "At the last one of these get-togethers, a woman came up to me and asked me to give her a reading. That sort of thing happens fairly often. And some people seem to think that if they actually *see* Leo or Capricorn, or whatever, they'll be able to link that up with their astrological charts and learn how to run their lives."

It was getting darker. The cobalt was verging toward slate and was becoming a deeper, velvety expanse of sky, and someone called out, "Look! There's Vega!" (Vega, the brightest star in the constellation Lyra, is one of the earliest bright stars to appear on a summer evening.) Soon Arcturus and other bright stars became visible, and then a long line of people formed near a telescope whose owner had directed it at a particularly interesting double star known as Albireo. Though a double star looks fairly ordinary to the naked eye, it actually consists of two stars that revolve around each other. We joined the line, looked through the eyepiece of a telescope with a six-inch mirror, and saw two gleaming points of light, one of them sapphire blue and the other a dazzling gold.

At about ten o'clock, we found ourself beside a telescope manned by two young men from the Bronx. They introduced themselves as Glenn Schneider and Joseph Rao. Schneider, a curly-haired fellow in a sports shirt, told us that although he was now working for a computer company, he planned to enter a six-year program at the University of Florida this fall which would eventually lead to a Ph.D. in astrophysics.

By this time, the whole group on the lawn had begun to concentrate on Epsilon Lyrae—a quadruple-star system so unusual that it has come to be known to most astronomers simply as the Double-Double. "Epsilon Lyrae consists of four stars," Rao explained. "Looked at another way, it is a pair of pairs. The two stars in each pair revolve around each other, and each pair revolves around the other pair. It's thought to be a couple of hundred light-years from earth. Why don't you take a look?"

We peered through Rao's telescope and again saw two bright points of



light. But then, after concentrating for a moment, we could see that each point actually consisted of two stars.

A child of about five ran past us shouting, "Double-Double! Double-Double!"

"Astronomy is not only fascinating—it's endless," Rao said, with a smile. "On the night of the big blackout, the first thing I did was race for my telescope, which was in the garden behind my house. It was the first time in my life I'd been able to see the Milky Way from the Bronx."

Defending Yuri Orlov

A FRIEND in London writes:

John Macdonald is a well-organized forty-five-year-old British barrister and Queen's Counsel who acquired a client in Moscow last March and has wanted very much to visit him. When Macdonald applied to the Soviet Embassy in London in April for a visa, the staff kept his passport for ten days, then turned down his request. He is now about to ask again for a visa. Although Macdonald has experience in working for faraway clients, he has never defended a man before a court that he, the lawyer, was not permitted to set foot in. Macdonald thinks of himself as an ordinary commercial lawyer, but he has an interest in the rights of individuals against governments (he is chairman of the British Association of Liberal Lawyers), and he recently served as counsel to the Banaban Islanders in the Pacific, helping them win the offer of a settlement of six million pounds for losses that resulted from the exploitation of their island by phosphate-mining companies. His Russian client is Professor Yuri Orlov, a fifty-three-year-old physicist who has been in trouble on and off with the Soviet authorities for criticizing Communist Party policies. In January, 1974, after founding a Soviet unit of Amnesty International, and after writing a letter to Brezhnev defending the dissident Andrei Sakharov, Professor Orlov lost his job at the Institute of Theoretical and Experimental Physics in Moscow; for the next couple of years he earned a living coaching students for university-entrance exams. In May, 1976, Professor Orlov helped set up a citizens' group of eleven to promote and monitor Soviet observance of those sections of the Helsinki Accords dealing with human rights. On February 10th of this year, Professor Orlov was arrested. Seven or eight other members of Orlov's group and other such groups have also been arrested. However, Ludmilla Alexeyeva, in whose apartment Orlov was arrested, was allowed to leave the Soviet Union and is now in New York. On March 28th, when she was in London, she asked Macdonald to defend Yuri Orlov.

Macdonald at first had doubts. Would it make matters worse for Professor Orlov to have a foreign lawyer? Would it be possible for the lawyer to communicate with his client? But by April 11th, when he spoke on the telephone with Irina Valitova, Orlov's wife, and she implored him to defend her husband, he had already decided to do so. He has since talked with her several times. She speaks a little French, and calls from a public-telephone box in Moscow. Her own phone was cut off a year ago. Calling Moscow is difficult, Macdonald says. Sometimes the phone rings and is answered, and then, when you announce your name to the person who answered, it goes dead. Often, when a call is put in from Russia to a Western number that the authorities are concerned about, no connection is made. Mrs. Orlov has not been allowed to see her husband since his arrest, or talk with him by phone, or even leave a letter for him at Lefortovo Prison, in Moscow, where he is confined. However, in the last week of June she was questioned at the Lubyanka headquarters of the K.G.B. security police and was told that her husband had been charged with spreading "deliberately false fabrications defaming the Soviet state and social order."

In his panelled chambers in a quiet quadrangle of Lincoln's Inn, in London, Macdonald has been familiarizing himself with aspects of the Soviet legal system. Books on Soviet law sit on his desk. He has talked with Soviet lawyers who have left Russia and with Russians in exile, like Vladimir Bukovsky, who have experienced Soviet practice through arrest, prison, trial, and confinement in mental hospitals. Under Soviet law, a person may be kept in prison for nine months while he is under investigation. During this period, he often has to share a prison cell with a man who is an informer. At the end of the period, having had little chance to prepare a defense, he is taken before a court with no jury but with a judge and two civilians (called "people's assessors") who all vote on the verdict and with a lawyer "representing" the Soviet people. The prisoner is supposed to have a chance to meet a relative before trial. He may be defended by anybody of whom the court approves. Macdonald says, "There is nothing in the Soviet code to say you can have a foreign lawyer, and nothing to say you can't. However, I soon realized that even if I should be allowed to go to Moscow I would be a thundering liability to Orlov in a Moscow court. I speak three or four words of Russian. I would get shouted at by the judge. I have had to work out a different sort of defense."

Macdonald believes that Orlov will probably be charged under Article 190-1 of the Soviet Code, which deals with "the systematic circulation . . . of fabrications known to be false which defame the Soviet state and social system," and that he may be punished by a sentence of up to three years. The Soviet authorities no doubt assume that imposing such a penalty on Orlov would discourage dissent. Orlov and Andrei Amalrik, a Soviet writer now in the United States, had realized that the Helsinki Accords—though not the most forthright of international agreements—could be turned to good use in Russia. The Soviet government, with arbitrary thoroughness, had publicized the Accords, and, having said that it would respect such human rights as freedom to travel and communicate, had laid itself open to the charge of failing to do so. Orlov is said by his friends to have great organizing ability. He is an approachable man, who listens well. People from all walks of life, and from all over the Soviet Union, have been in contact with him. Under his leadership, the Moscow Helsinki group made possible a form of dissent not confined to intellectuals—a form seen in other Eastern-bloc countries but never before in the Soviet Union. The Soviet government is thus exceptionally worried about Orlov's effect.

Macdonald's campaign for the defense has been conducted on two fronts. He says, "First, I've gathered evidence to show the truth of what the Helsinki group has been alleging—in other words, to show that the reports they've published are true and therefore are not defamations or slanders. I want Mrs. Orlov to have this evidence, so that she can give it to her husband. I also, of course, would like to see Professor Orlov and advise him, so that he may defend himself in court. His friends feel that he could do a good job if he had the material." Macdonald's second front is necessary because he believes that the Russians will probably not let him in. "I doubt if they will name a date for the trial," he says. "I think they will spring it on Professor Orlov quietly, and before the Belgrade conference on the Helsinki Accords resumes this fall. I imagine the trial will be in Moscow, and, although a few of Orlov's friends may be able to get into the courtroom, the initiative will remain entirely with the Soviet authorities. I therefore decided to start presenting my client's defense here in London and, by publicizing it as widely as I could, insure that his case was heard."

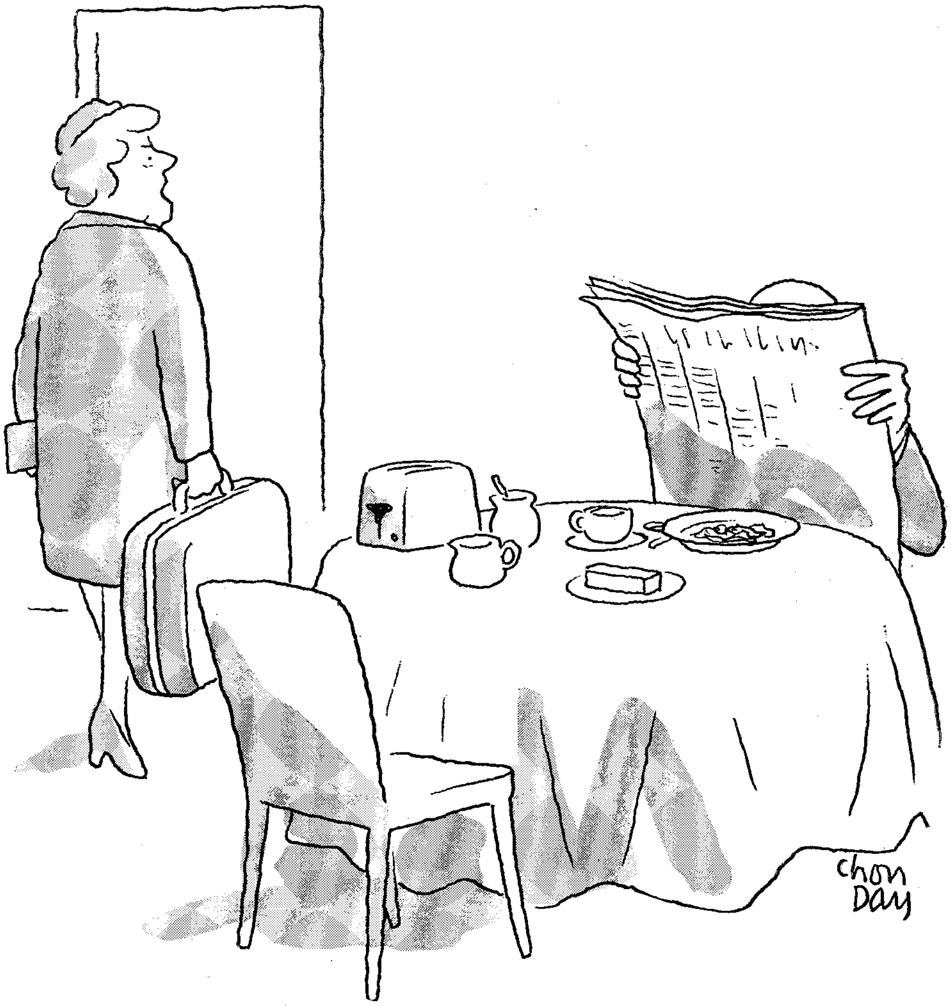
On June 13th, two days before the first, agenda-arranging session of the Belgrade conference opened, Macdonald made a detailed presentation of Orlov's defense at the Institute of Physics in Belgrave Square; members of the institute had offered him the space as a way of showing their support for their Russian colleague. At the Institute of Physics, before an invited jury of diplomats, lawyers, and journalists, Mr. Macdonald questioned a number of Russians, who had come from new homes in such places as France, Cali-

"I'd like a medium-priced respite from the cares of the day."

fornia, Israel, and Germany. They testified to psychiatric abuse, mistreatment in hospitals, prisons, and camps, interference with telephone calls and letters, the persecution and harassment of religious communities, the separation of families, and the difficulty or impossibility of leaving the country. The witnesses included Vladimir Bukovsky, Andrei Amalrik, the mathematician Leonid Plyushch, and the poet Natalya Gorbanevskaya, who all declared their willingness to be summoned to give evidence in the Soviet court or at a Soviet consulate in the country they were living in. Ludmilla Alexeyeva, who had served with Orlov in the Moscow group for almost a year, came from New York to testify about how she had gathered evidence for several reports she had worked on (the group published nineteen full-scale reports): for one she had travelled to Lithuania to investigate in person the troubles of a number of Roman Catholic children who had been expelled from their school for visiting a priest. A young woman named Lydia Voronina described a three-week trip she had made to Asiatic Russia, under the close surveillance of the K.G.B., to examine the hardships of two Christian Pentecostal communities. The hearing at the institute in Belgrave Square brought about the largest gathering of Russian dissidents to take place in the West in recent times. According to many observers, it was a moving occasion. Four television crews were there, but the ensuing press coverage was spotty. Next day, the tabloid *Daily Mail* gave the hearing its entire front page, but the *Guardian* didn't mention it at all. Macdonald says, "There is a strong feeling in the British press that nothing can be done about Russia—let them get on with it. Besides, many editors believe that none of their readers understand Russian names." But he adds, "If a fair-minded person reads the Orlov groups' original reports and couples them with the evidence given at the institute hearing, he can't avoid the conclusion that the reports were well researched and written in a sincere belief in their truth."

Macdonald is now conducting a postal battle with the Soviet authorities. He has sent off dossiers of the hearing evidence to the Russian Embassy in London and to the office of the Chief Procurator, in Moscow. He has used registered mail, with prepaid requests for advice of delivery, and recently received word from the Russian Embassy that his mail has been received by the Procurator's office. He has sent similar bundles of evidence to Mrs. Orlov in the same manner, and has written to the Russian Ambassador in London telling him that he has done so and that he will be interested to see if Mrs. Orlov receives them. He has not heard that she has, and he has had no reply from the Ambassador about this. He intends to pursue the matter to find out why the Russians are not fulfilling their obligations under international postal agreements. Macdonald has also written the Chief Procurator, R. A. Rudenko, a one-lawyer-to-another letter, in which he passes on the greetings of the British Lord Chancellor, Lord Elwyn-Jones, with whom Rudenko served on the Allied bench at the war-crime trials in Nuremberg. Macdonald asks Rudenko to look into the Orlov matter, and reminds him that holding persons incommunicado without publishing charges against them is the sort of conduct that Rudenko and Elwyn-Jones would have condemned at Nuremberg. He has not heard from Rudenko, or from the Moscow College of Advocates, to which he addressed a letter asking for information about Orlov's case.

Macdonald says, "It's a tragedy that in a political trial in Moscow today there are no lawyers who are prepared to ask for an acquittal. One distinguished Russian woman lawyer, Sophie Kallistratova, who defended several dissidents, including General Grigorienko, is reported to have joined the Helsinki group and to have lost her right to appear in political trials. As for the judges, they appear to do their best in ordinary civil or criminal trials, but in political cases they seem to resign themselves to the dictate that the state comes before all else. Even so, I should think that the need to explain away the failure to make an independent, just decision must have been uncomfortable for them from time to time. One Russian lawyer, now in exile, has said to me that Professor Orlov, when he is asked why he has accepted a foreign legal adviser, should tell the court that he didn't want to make life difficult for a Soviet lawyer—that he thought it better to get an outsider, who would not be embarrassed by declaring in court that his client was innocent and that the state, therefore, was in the wrong."



"Arthur, I'm leaving you and the New York 'Times.'"

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REVELATIONS OF A LIST-MAKER

LISTS thrill me. A pity I am obliged to express it in that manner, for I would much prefer to put it:

Lists
thrill
me

And let no one mistake my laddered statement for that petulant exercise called a poem—a literary artifact that takes its alignment from lists.

For those who scarcely know me, or who yet do not know me, and who frown on (or might frown on) my passion for impassioning pieces of vertical reading, I wish to put it on record that many of the "literary" greats of the century

a Yeats
b Hemingway
c Auden
for
example

have owned up to a preference for lists over literature—even for lists less great than those of Cortes.

1 Yeats
2 would
3 confess
4 with
5 unmistakable
6 pleasure
7 that
8 his
9 favorite
10 reading
11 was
12 always
13 timetables

(As it happens, I attached lower-case letters and numbers to the preceding lists so that they would not be taken for poems. The superstitious can thus disregard the last number, which is formally inevitable.)

The finest pages of this century's Fitzgerald are filled with names, in a list, of guests at anticlimactic parties. Hemingway, for his part, recommended that beginning writers study the racing bulletin—the best advice that this linear writer could ever have given. Auden, a born list-maker, spoke up not only for railway timetables but for "every kind of list."

More seriously, or perhaps less timidly (or, if my enemies prefer it, more incoherently), I am planning to write a masterwork, no less, which will consist of nothing but a list. So far

(
7:15 P.M.
Closerie des Sapins
Kraainem
Brussels
Belgium
Western Europe
Eurasia
Earth
The Solar System
The Milky Way
The Universe
)

certain limitations—the infinite range of my theme, the inexhaustibility of the argument, and the difficulty of listing the characters, to mention only the novelistic restraints—stand in the way of my enumerative ambitions.

Some distinguished precedents, however—the telephone book, the Sears, Roebuck catalogue, the Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy—sustain me in my project. And in spite of the doubts with which, like all creators, I am plagued at times, especially in the mornings (when I see the front pages taken up with tedious news that seems to be the same news over again with different names, day after day, while the classified advertisements, the entertainment schedules, and the obituary notices are buried in the guts and attics of the back pages), I think I have overcome that matutinal paralysis and achieved a few gains in my proposed direction.

Recently, I wrote a brief treatise, provisionally called the Gelardino Index, which begins with Abel. Only the thinness of the paper, the leakiness of my pen, and the unwelcome physical and mental wearisomeness of steady typing have prevented it from appearing before now.

I have also put together some lists of medium length, which, at the risk of seeming immodest, I think not at all bad. (I prefer, of course, to sin on the side of immodesty than to be counted incorrect—or, what is worse, inexhaustive.)

I have also finished a Superficial Summary, to be followed by a Supreme Summary—a work with loftier enumerative ambitions and one that I have been planning for some time without settling in my mind its final form, being unsure how to resolve the continuity of its parts and a little embarrassed by the Thomist ostentation of my tome.

My real magnum opus will be, unquestionably, a work that combines my two passions—definitive lists and ancient history. It will not soon be published, but parts will appear in such reviews of limited circulation as the Official Gazette, the Daily List, and the Edicts of the Central Office of the Census and Public Registry. This summa of my Babylonian enumerations will bear the title—as apt as it is lofty, to my taste—the Sumerian Summary. I have been guided in the planning and elaboration of its design by close reading of the actual text of Genesis.

I do not want to let that Biblical reference pass without rendering censual homage to that censorial chronicle, that book of books, the Book of Numbers. My eyes fill with tears at the sight of these definitive verses:

14 One spoon of ten shekels of gold, full of incense:
15 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:
16 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:
17 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year

They have thrilled me once

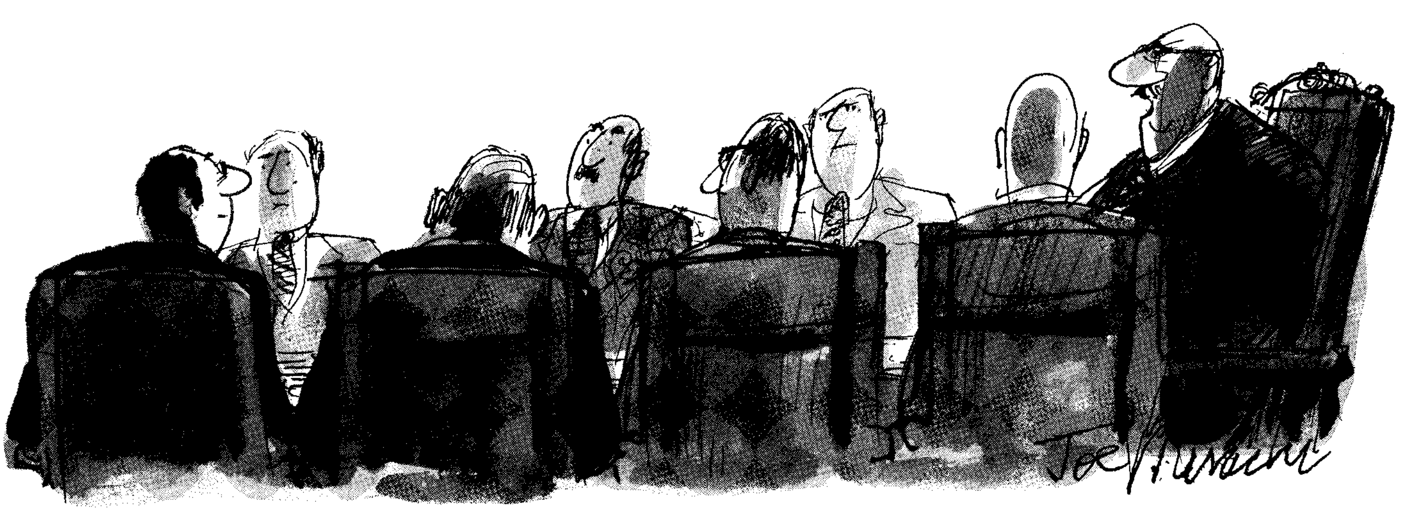
and again
and again
and again
and one time more
and yet again
and again
and again
and again
and again!

They can always thrill me one more time! And how thrilling, too, are these—from the same numerary book, yet perhaps even more elegant and moving:

20 One spoon of gold of ten shekels, full of incense:
21 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:
22 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:
23 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year

What compressed beauty! What tonal diversity! How Biblical and, by that token, divine are these inevitable and necessary inventories! They no longer make reckonings like these!

Neither do they achieve today any-



"Damn it, Crenshaw, when I said 'Any questions?' I was merely using a figure of speech."

• •

thing like these next verses, so different and at the same time just as moving—

26 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense:
27 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:
28 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:
29 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year

—or even these masterly ones, a little farther on, which I wish to quote at the risk of seeming unfair to the admirable verses that have gone before:

80 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense:
81 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:
82 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:
83 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year

I could go on copying these diverse lists past the Day of Judgment—an occasion on which I would embrace their author, the immortal and anonymous Hebrew, with tears on my fingertips, my indexes trembling from the lists of the book that makes of enumeration not only numerical poetry but also essential eschatological inventory. The Book of Numbers is my numen!

There are, of course, other books in the Bible in which enumeration is a running source of emotion and of meticulous lists: Leviticus, for example, which I know by heart. But there are, as well, key passages more recondite and concealed but no less revealing: the division of the lands of the kings defeated by Joshua; a few pages later, the list of the cities of Judea; and, needless to say, the glorious genealogies of Genesis, which turn up again in Numbers and reach real annotatory frenzy in the inexhaustible Book of the Chronicles:

1 Adam, Sheth, Enosh,
2 Kenan, Mahalaleel, Jered,
3 Henoch, Methuselah, Lamech

But how to go on? Listing these listings

lists
indexes
rolls
minutes
catalogues
tables
outlines
inventories
almanacs
assessments
censuses
checklists

and genealogical trees for which one cannot see the woods of Biblical generations—simply putting them one after the other—is a pleasure that goes far beyond the bounds of mere collecting, of writing columns for vertical reading, to transport the imagination to digital delight and exhaustive ecstasy.

Unfortunately, in the light of the Old Testament, everything becomes decadent. The New Testament—even a book as annotative as Revelation—leaves much to be desired. Let us not speak of the Homeric lists, since to run through them after reciting Biblical ones is like watching a drizzle after living through the Flood: "They sent to the Boeotians Peneleus, Leitus, Archesilaus, Prothoenor and Clonius. Those who cultivated the lands of Hyrie, stony Aulis, Schoneus, Scolus, rough Etoneus, Thespeia, Graia and the plains of Mycalessus; those who dwelt in Harma, Eilesion and Erythrae; those who peopled Eleon, Hyle, Peteon, Ocalea, Medeon . . ."

It is hardly worth quoting this sort of thing, for references to mountains, hills, and piles are mere horizontal reading. As for the Odyssey, it would be better to forget it. The tedious flow of the Homeric cantos passes up every opportunity for a list, devoting itself instead to a dull and cloying lyricism, to erotic interludes and romantic adventure, to all the pretensions of one writing a novel for the very first time.

Vergil makes something more out of the setting of Troy and the war, the sacking and the slaughter—a perfect subject for catalogues of arms, soldiers, diverse heroes, ranks, fights, types of wounds, and forms of death and pillaging, and an enviable opportunity, besides, for inventories of booty and goods handed over as ransom. But other classical authors were as weak as Homer, failing to grasp obvious opportunities to make lists. The Satyricon passes over the sensual occasion of Trimalchio's feast with a few feeble notes. How sad that Petronius should be overcome by enumerative modesty, when there were at that sumptuous banquet meats to account for, delicacies to tick off, fruits to note down, along with the timetable of their respective servings, always with the inevitable garnishes. The list of diners alone would have been of Pantagruelian proportions. A pity that the Arbiter of Elegance was not a Hebrew!

The same may be said of Plutarch

JOSEPH FARRIS

"Oh, she's got charm, if you like charm."

• •

and Suetonius, given the Greek moderation of the one and the Roman austerity of the other. Only Tacitus, giving the lie to his name, expressly lists consuls, proconsuls, families, lineages, and dynasties, thus becoming a great historian in my restless list-maker's eyes.

I do not want to dwell on all the treasured books in my ample library. It is obvious that I prefer, for my private temple of list-making, bare accountings, with hardly a trace of literature about them, to heretical works of narrative. In my sanctum sanctorum, the only concession I make to the taste for vulgar narrative is a single copy of "Gargantua and Pantagruel," from which I eliminated all the parts rendered dull by their lack of enumeration, retaining only the glorious Rabelaisian lists. But my collection does include some volumes for ordinary reading, meant more for friends and the odd visitor who manages to fight his way to my study through the labyrinth of archives, files, dossiers, and ledgers, great and small.

But I must confess that these friends and acquaintances are few, so scarce by now that they do not stir me to make even a brief list of their names. I can count them on three fingers of my left hand. But I wanted it so: one by one I have broken the bonds that fastened me to those whom I have found incapable of sharing my appreciation for the beauty of lists.

I have an infallible system for testing the intellectual incapacity of anyone who has not yet been warned of my indifference to such individuals. When one persists in calling on me, afternoon after afternoon I put into his hands a copy of a telephone book (one or another from my extensive collection: perhaps a Swedish directory, to put to an additional test his patience, the ordinal virtue of the list-maker) or a yearbook or one of the Army & Navy Stores catalogues, which I have had sent from England from the first edition to the present. If the visitor disdains these founts of delight, then, ipso facto, my disdain for him is of a like intensity, and soon I let him feel he is intruding.

This house of mine, which daily becomes more and more the perfect retreat and archive, is a great ocean of shelves now that I am finally rid of the last of the scruples—may they rest in peace!—that once kept me from throwing out useless furniture to make room for what is, to me, a miracle of the functional:

shelves shelves shelves shelves shelves
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of:

telephone guides
tourist guides
travel guides

lists
listings
bulletins
battle alignments with
lists of the fallen

catalogues of
        hardware stores
        editors
        bookstores

medical annuals
botanical annuals
mechanical annuals

et cetera
et cetera
et cetera
et cetera
et cetera

and some more abstract works—pure specimens of the list-maker's art, such as

The Advertisers' Annual
The Catalogue of Catalogues
The List of Lists

and that sublime work of Saxon literature the Domesday Book.

At odd times, so as to put myself in touch with the world (for which I feel no nostalgia at all except, perhaps, for the memory of school days, which began, early in the morning, with a glorious reveille, the calling of the roll, an enumeration that brought forth not only each child's echoing "Present!" but also the lucky repetition—three times, even!—of the name of an absentee), I turn on the television, like any ordinary mortal, to see the daily program schedules, with respective titles and times. Then I turn off the machine at once, for the images that might follow could upset my pleasure in the phosphorescent memory of those fleeting lists.

Sometimes I go out to eat. That is a habit from which I have not been able to free myself: eating at home, I lose the ultimate appetizer, the unfolding of the menu. I keep a collection of menus, but nothing can replace the surprise of an unknown one—hence my ceaseless search for new restaurants or, even better, brand-new restaurants.

I also go to the movies—to my favorite showings, the continuous ones. If it is a double feature, as it almost always is, I try to arrive at the end of one of the two films. In that way, none of the idiotically simple stories, which I scarcely notice as I wait out the fatal conclusion of adventures and misfortunes, can keep me from missing the perpetually renewable pleasure of contemplating the concluding list of actors and roles and of swooning over the credits, that generic alphabet that is like the beginning of the Bible.

During these sallies into the horizontal world of streets and avenues, nothing gives me so much pleasure as contemplating skyscrapers and counting their floors, imagining that they are lists of windows to scan from top to bottom—nothing, of course, except languidly visiting railroad stations, bus terminals, and airports to read, one by one, the itineraries, arrival and departure times, lists of flights: every kind of schedule, with its identifying form, in accordance with the magic and wonder of the vertical world of lists.

In these true cathedrals of list-making, the officiant (who assumes the providential shape of a knowing official to whom I reveal by secret signals my membership in his brotherhood) pauses for a moment in his essential creative labor among teleprinters, adding machines, and ledgers to let me read, trembling with emotion and gratitude, secret passenger lists, which I devour, my eyes moving up and down, exulting, until I surrender to a paroxysm that takes place neither in the adding eyes nor in the counting lips but rises through the diverse levels of the mystical scale, running through it stage by stage in a list that becomes bliss.

—GUILLERMO CABRERA INFANTE

(*Translated, from the Spanish, by Alastair Reid.*)

STANDARDS

Sadly among the patient standards
Of trees the twirlers arrive to conduct
The last of the summer's orchestral pieces.
The garden's icetray of seeds is about
To swing back into its glacial room;
In dimming light, in impervious shade,
Being is only a caster of rings,
A moment oiled by an Indian giver
Each year becoming more subtle in taking
Down the last partitions of leaves.

Across the field, in a field, some horses
Chomp on summer, green crop turning
Into a lawn of lap robes skillfully
Stitched, moss mounds thinning to moons
Of suède—so they appear from a distance.
The air is a brandy snifter of pine,
Fresh in this land of oaks and azaleas,
Of acid earth rhododendrons love,
A bit too sandy for roses but
Perfect for lilies that last a day.

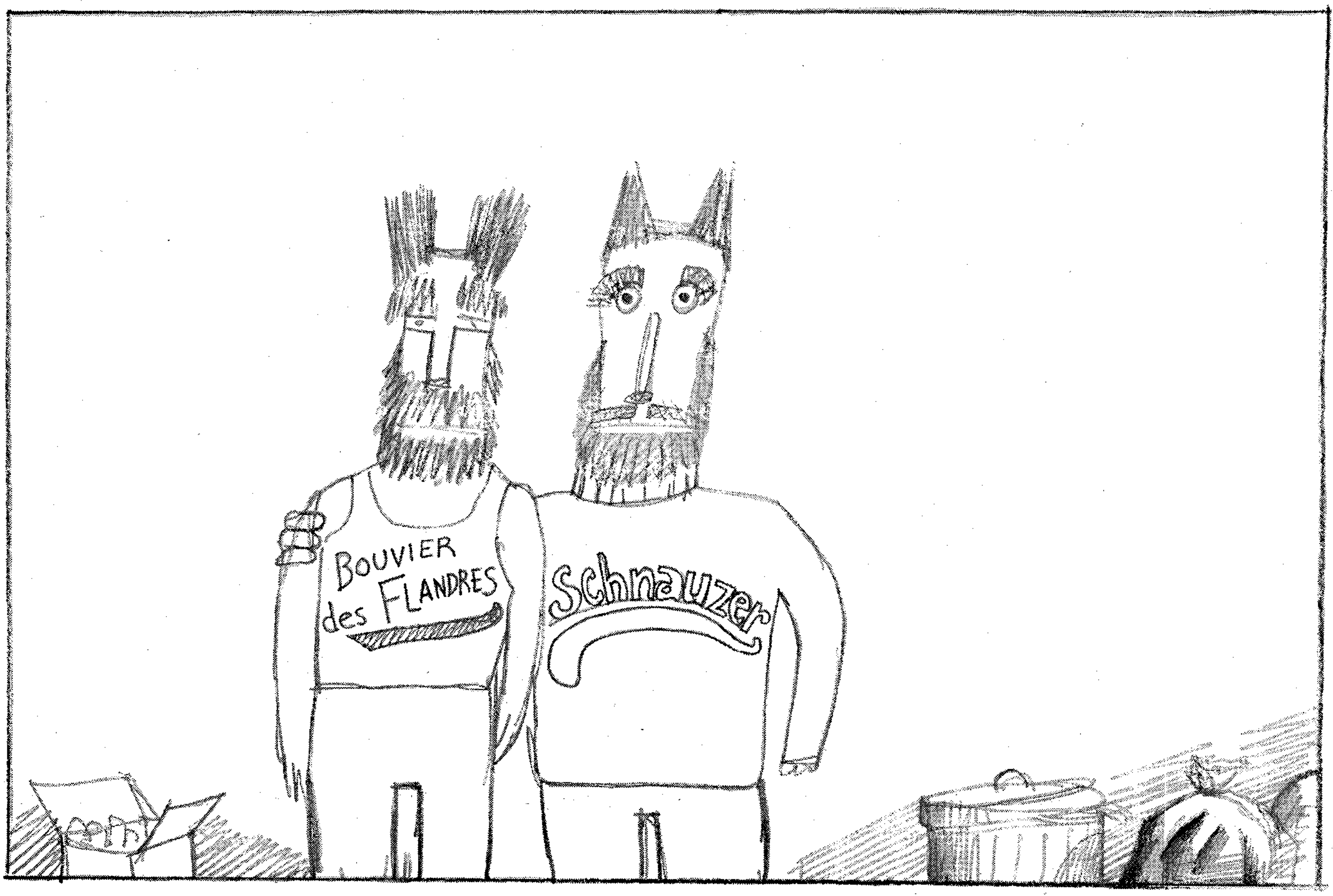
The butterfly's parturition, its swift
Demise occur in a wink, and things
That took their own sweet time to be
Themselves reluctantly leave:
Seeds, weeds, the gods of the seasons
Bowing in mist, while in the wings
Two sets of actors are exchanging costumes,
The street urchins shaking hands with the angels,
The woods about to speak to the axeman.

Two times the light gets lacier: when
Insects pattern the leaves with bites,
A ferocious munching one hears at night
In spring—an invasion of gypsy moths—
And now, when the leaves are no longer partial
But slip away and are totally gone,
So though there is less and less of light,
Still, by being able to shine
Down through the vertical hallways of oaks,
It seems to increase in intensity.

The seeds with their little valises fly
Over the scene and look for a landing;
Any spot of common earth will do
In the sun. Preferably moist. The dew
Does wonders. Already one sees next year
Spring up: tree, flower, bush, and weed,
The butterfly conjoin with the tiger lily,
The roadside aster purple the border,
The process random, none of it wary,
Forgetting how dumb form is in history.

Ocean houses breaded with lilac,
A dry stick of a hut embedded in sand,
Things man-made and some things natural
Go: one storm slams through a solid
Wall, brings trees to their knees, and sucks
A beach house down from the dunes in boards;
The beach changes its contours nightly,
And so, if you are coming to see me,
Come soon. Today's astringent, perfect,
A perfection not to be known for long.

—HOWARD MOSS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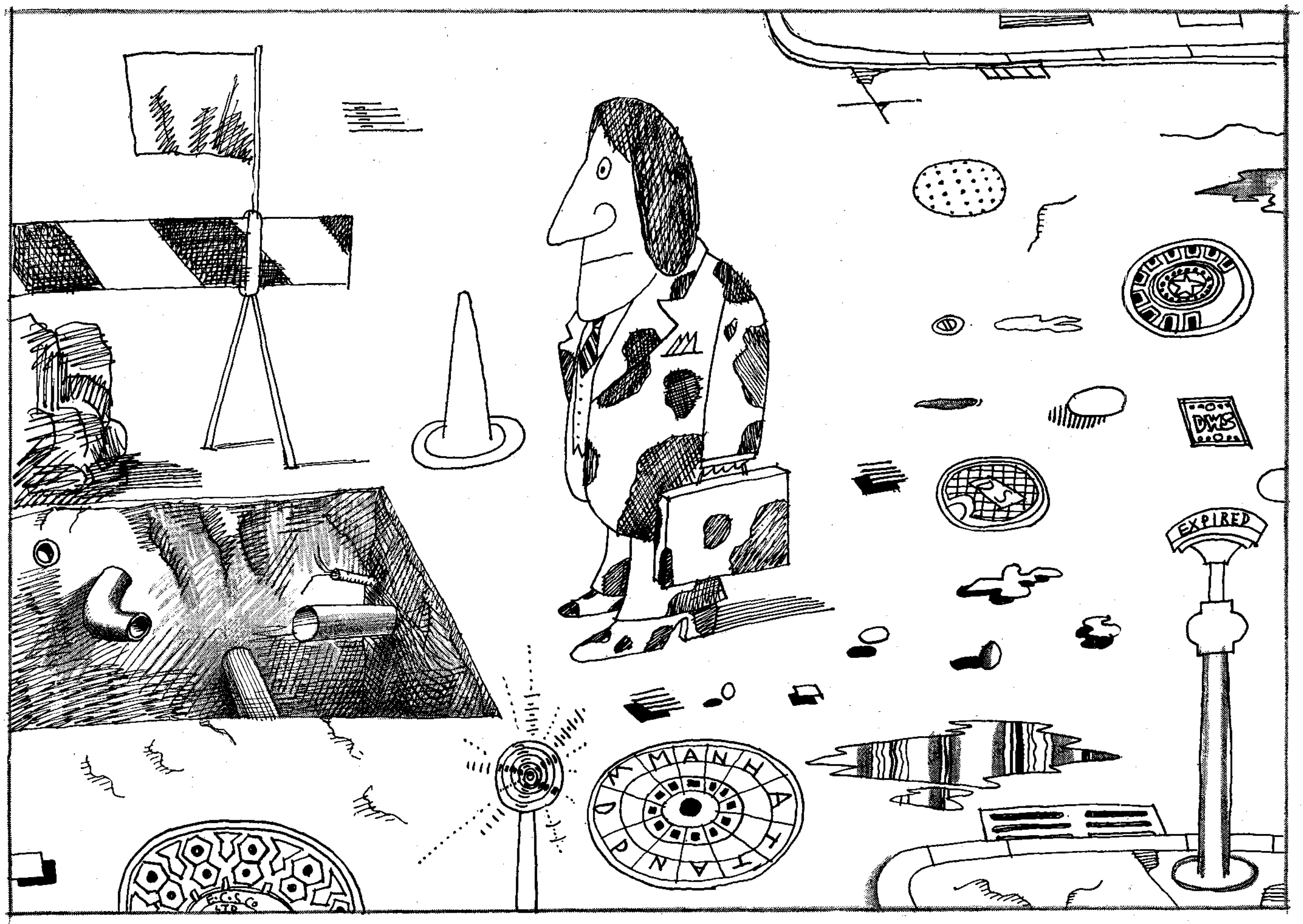
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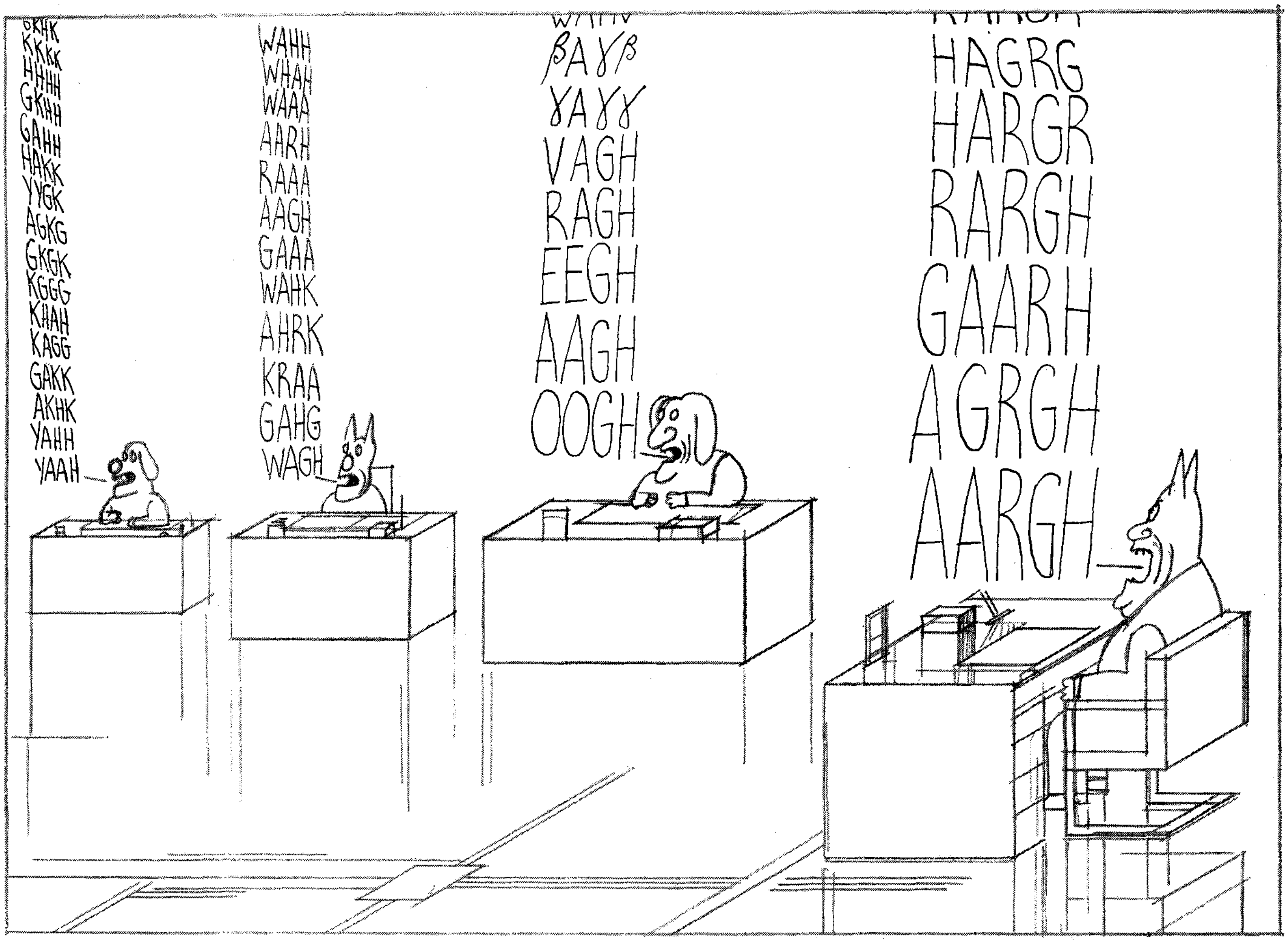
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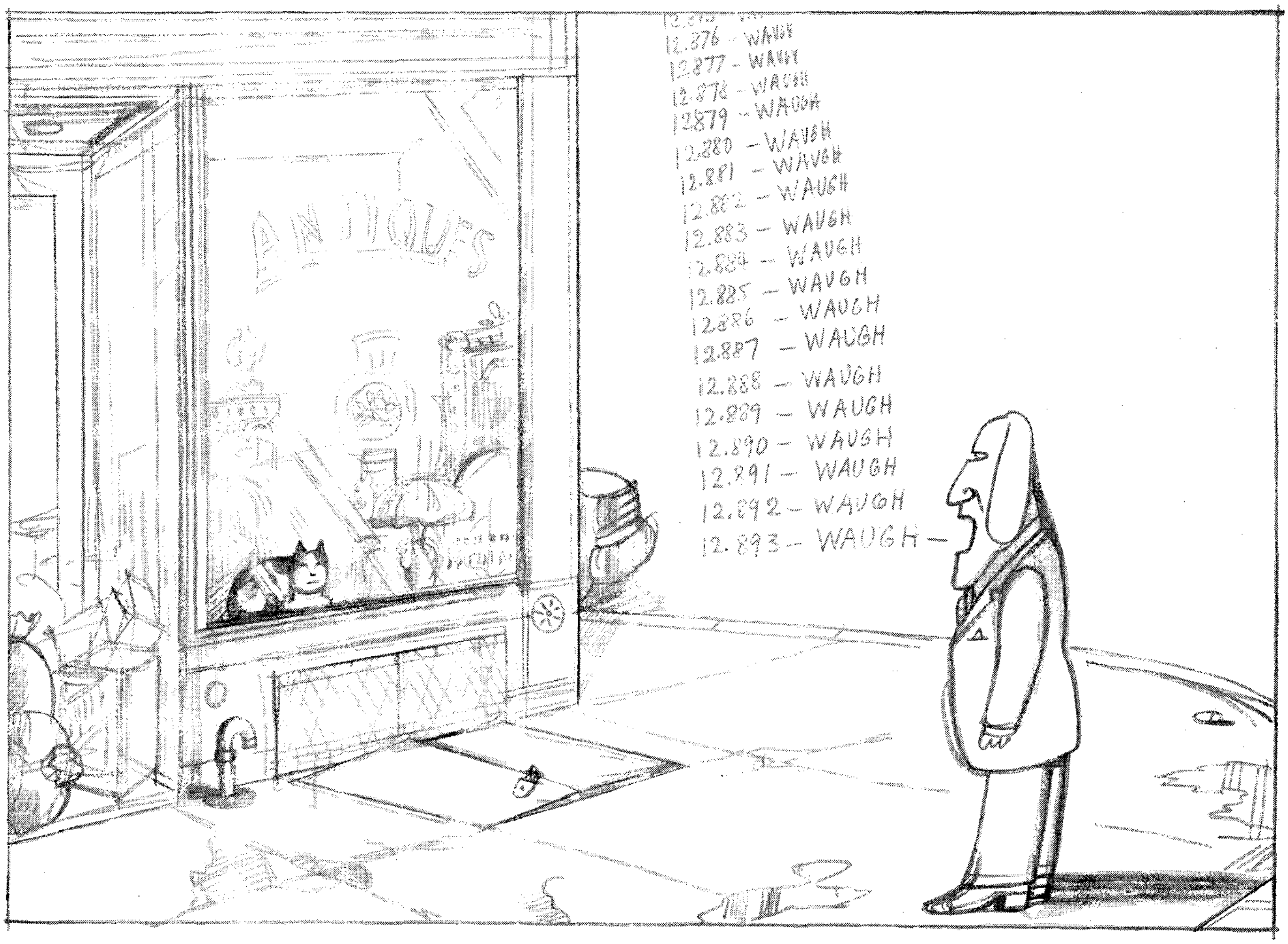
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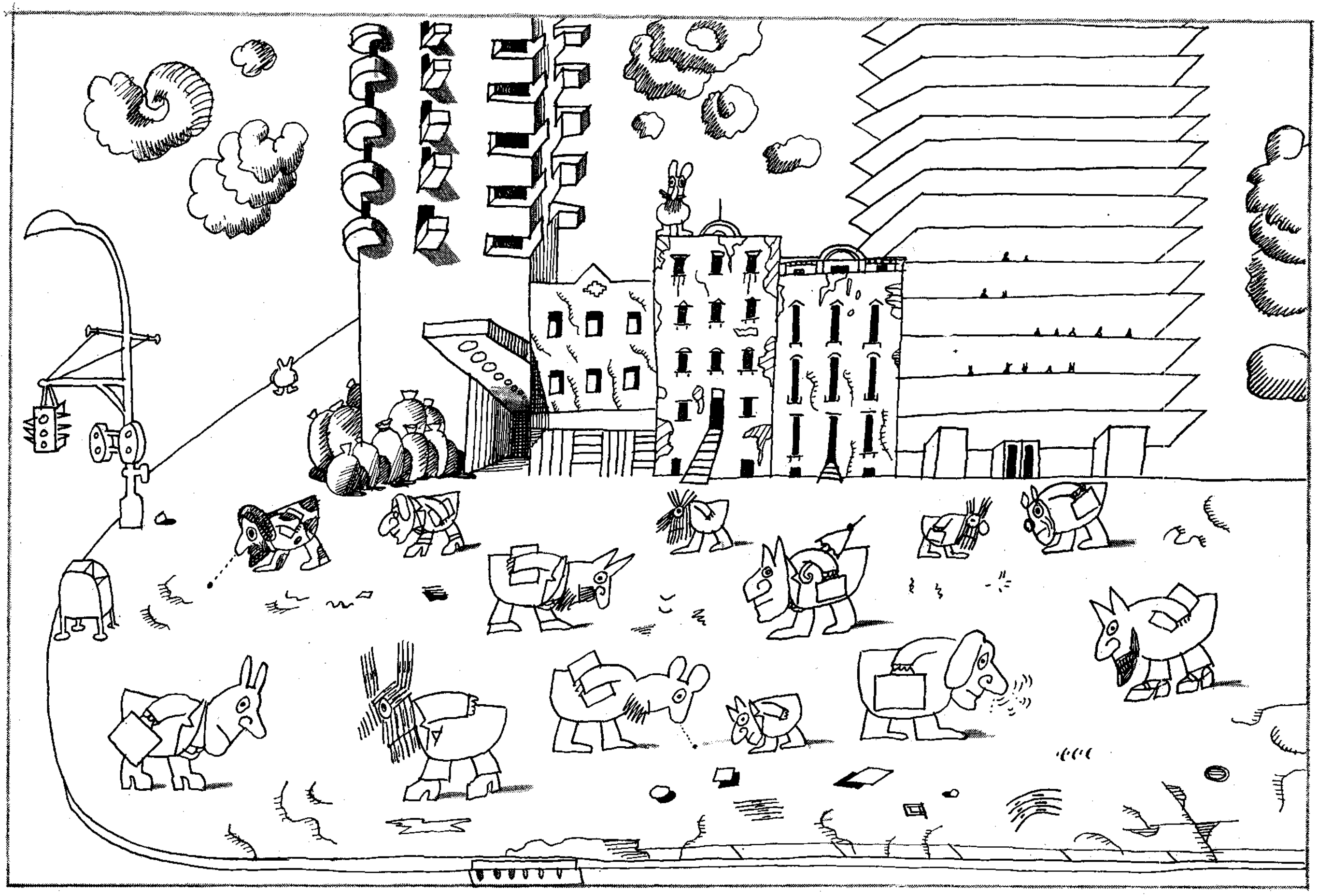
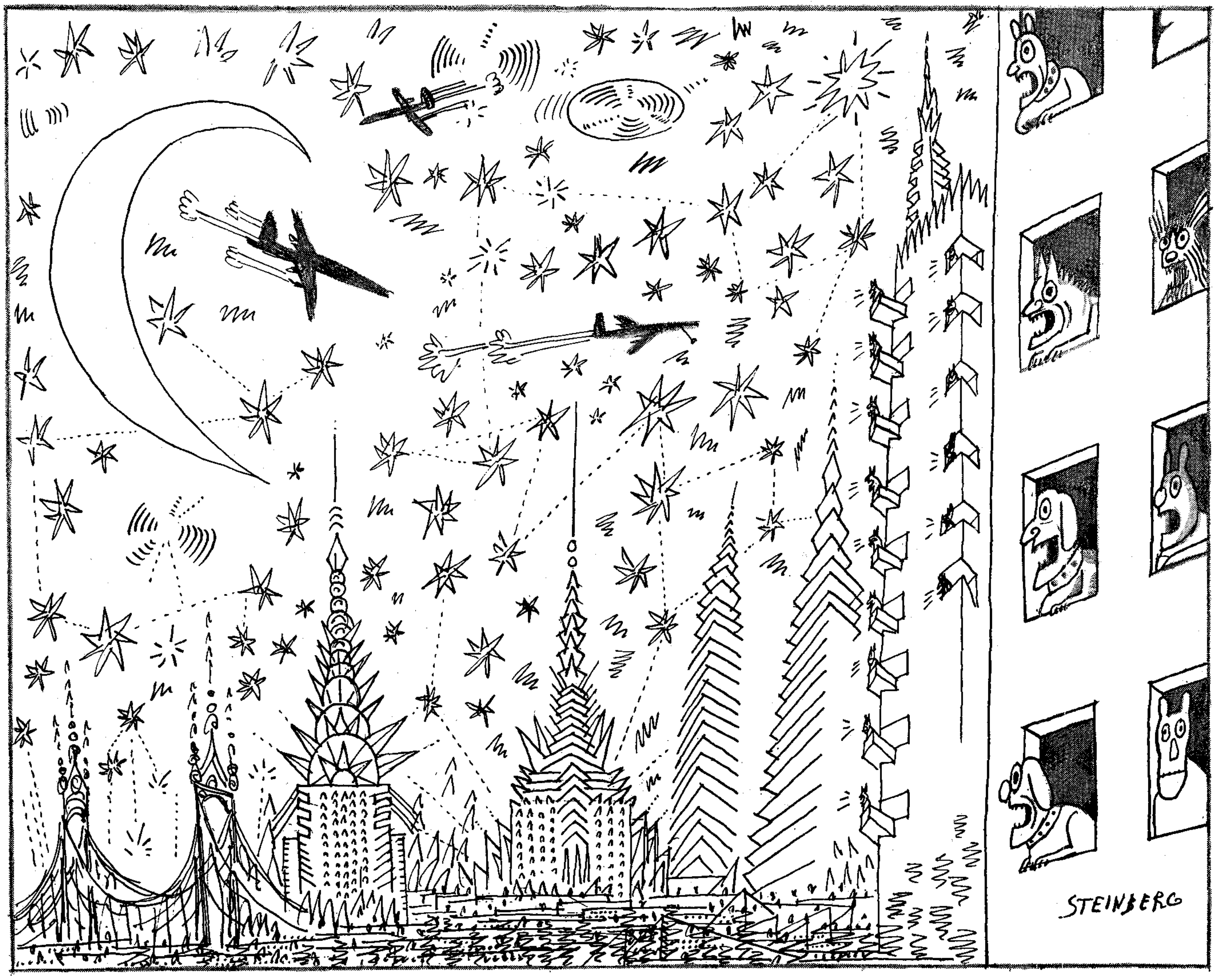



STEINBERG

GUILT-GEMS

Ferguson, a divorced, middle-aged man, discovered in the blue ground of his midnight brain certain bright moments that never failed to make him feel terrible. Guilty.

One gem showed his younger son, at that time about fourteen, in tearful exasperation throwing two cats down the cellar stairs. The enveloping situation was this: Ferguson's doctor had strongly advised him, for the sake of his asthma, to get rid of the cats. "But they're the children's pets," Ferguson had said. "We can't just get rid of them."

"Get rid of them," his doctor had said. "Those cats are suffocating you."

"They don't mean to," Ferguson had pointed out. "They can't help making dander."

"Tell Eileen to get rid of them. Tell Eileen it's either you or those cats."

"I've told her, and she says the children love the cats. She's right. She's always right. What can we do?"

His doctor then had peered at him through the upper half of his bifocals. Returning his eyes to the record he was making of this visit, he muttered, "It would help to keep them down in the cellar."

But the cats had been used to the run of the house and always found ways to evade their confinement. They would writhe out through a loose cellar window and come in through the kitchen door with the milkman, or a visiting child, or with Eileen when she had her hands full. Ferguson's asthma continued bad. He was clogging his lungs with the Medihaler; his hands trembled. Only his younger son recognized the emergency: it was his father or the cats. Since the cats could be neither killed nor controlled, Ferguson would have to leave. He had already made his decision when, one day otherwise altogether forgotten, he saw the boy so desperately trying to keep the animals in the cellar and his father in the house.

Had Ferguson imagined his son's tears of despairing fury? He thought not; there has to be some shine of the extreme, to make a guilt-gem.

•

Months later, he had left, and one of the duties that had fallen to him in the breakup was the driving of his older son back to his boarding school, in southern New Hampshire. It was usually a Sunday night, and the night he remembered must have been in winter, for there seemed to be ice everywhere. In the car, they had tried to talk; Ferguson had tried to thank the boy, for continuing to go to his classes, to pass his exams, to play on the hockey team, to grow. For Ferguson's dereliction loomed to him so large that he saw it as a blanket permission for all the derelictions in the world. The boy had listened in a silence that became wet and warm and heavy-breathing, and when Ferguson mentioned the name of the woman, not the child's mother, that he was seeing, the boy said "Yeah" with the quickness of a sucked breath. He knew enough and wanted to know no more: it was the kind of signal one man gives another.

Yet at the destination, in the dark cold spaces of the campus, after unloading from the car some piece of the bulky equipment—ski boots, or a guitar—essential to an American male adolescent, the boy kissed him goodbye. The lit windows of the dormitories glowed all about them. The kiss was like a little spot warmed through a frosty windowpane. Through it Ferguson saw how the boy's room felt to him, as haven—haven, amid the Escher prints and motorcycle posters, the hi-fi sets and horseplay-scarred walls, from the horror of having parents.

Also in this period, his younger daughter, his baby, still bearing baby fat, yet with a woman's heart-shaped face, across the net from him at tennis bravely announced, as she hit the ball with a clumsy forehand, "I think you're very *self*ish." The "self" stood out twangingly in the memory, the sweet spot of the sentence. The ball was out. He called it in. It was this false call, oddly, that had crystallized. Her accusation had the flaw that it was *meant* to make him feel guilty; and such a moment is to the real thing as a cultured pearl is to the found pearl.

•

His older daughter had married soon after his divorce, as if to keep a marriage in the family. She had been his child longer than any; she had taken the full brunt of his parental ineptitude. Once, he had twirled her by the hands so hard that her little wristbones audibly snapped, though X-rays at the hospital showed no fracture. On another occasion of acrobatic foolery, she had bitten him on the leg to get him to stop holding her upside down. Worse than these shameful incidents, however, loomed a childish softball game he had played as pitcher for two teams of children, his own and a neighbor's. For some reason, the neighbor's children feasted off his underhand offerings, pounding hit after hit into the tall grass of the outfield. His own children chased the ball until they were red in the face, while those loathsome little opponents jeeringly rounded the bases.

When at last the young Fergusons' turn at bat came, the very intensity of their father's wish to serve up fat pitches must have put something baffling on the ball, for they unaccountably hit pop-ups and dribblers. A ball bounced out to the mound and Ferguson had no choice but to field it and chase down his older daughter as she raced from first to second. The child didn't have a chance; his legs were longer. He could think of no way not to make the play. In the moment before the tag, she looked at him with a smile, a smile preserved as in amber by a childish wild plea on her face. She was out.

And now, though all the other players of that day had grown much larger, and whatever expression *he* had worn in that moment had faded forever from his daughter's mind, her bright helpless face hovering above her hurrying body had lost none of its lustre for Ferguson, none of its edge, and immutably invested him with shame, with an urgent futile need to undo, whenever he held this moment against the blue light of midnight.

•

Guilt, for those prone to it, need not attach to conduct generally judged reprehensible. Had Ferguson deliberately dropped the ball, had he *not* tagged his daughter out, that would have been reprehensible. In himself he detected, like the background radio noise that underlies the universe and apparently is still transmitting the big bang of its creation, a pervasive ceaseless guilt in regard to his children for having called them into being at all. Just to see one of them walk across a high-school stage to receive a diploma, or up a church aisle to get married, or into the thick of a college soccer game on an overcast November Saturday, was to spangle his insides with terror.

Contrariwise, while it was widely

agreed he had treated his ex-wife reprehensibly, her image shed his guilt as a seal sheds droplets of water. In his dreams she floated lithe and uncomplaining, and about ten years younger than she really was. He did remember this: at some point in their separation, Eileen had put her arms around him in their old kitchen, overcome by the sight of him once more leaving, and had sobbed; and by sympathetic pumping action her belly beat against his like a heart. Like a heart: more background noise, momentarily amplified by a defect in his automatic deafener.

•

His mother, now old, and he, now single, had flown to England together for a trip; she had always wanted to see Tintern Abbey. But she lived in southern New Jersey and he had holed up in Boston, so from Kennedy Airport she had to drive home alone, while he took a shuttle flight in the opposite direction. Worse, he drove himself in her car to LaGuardia, giving her the wheel with all of Queens and Brooklyn between her and the route home. Could she make it, in the Sunday traffic of megalopolis, tired as she was from the trip? As when he had fielded the softball and his daughter was racing from first to second, he couldn't think what else to do. But tag her. But abandon her.

It was a raw spring evening in the eastern United States. Rain bejewelled the windshield and there was just enough light left for her to make the Verrazano Bridge. Ferguson studied the map. "278, Mother," he said. "Just stay on 278 South, no matter what."

"278 South," she said, faintly, from a great distance away, behind the wheel. The distance between them, after their week together, had suddenly become the distance between one who must fly and one who must drive, between one who must submit and one who must steer. She was seventy-two. A sea of damp metal surrounded her. It had been sunny—that golden, almost mintable sunshine of poems—at Tintern Abbey.

"Stay in your lane," he told her. "If anybody honks, ignore them."

"They might be trying to tell me something."

"They have nothing to tell you," he told her. "Don't change lanes without looking, is all."

"Once I get to the turnpike, I'll be all right," she offered.

"278 South will take you there," he said. "Mother, maybe you should stay in a motel. Maybe I should drive with you and fly from Philly."

"Don't be silly," she said. "The light's fading. I can do it. My goodness. I just stay on 278."

"South," he said.

Sitting behind the wheel, she was trembling; more than trembling—she was filling the interior of the car with the anticipatory vibrations of a girl before a dance. Her cheek, as he leaned over to kiss it, was stretched smooth by fear, and he could smell perfume, the perfume our nerves give off above a certain pitch of tension. He pulled his suitcase out of the car and slammed the door. As she haltingly pulled into the roadway, in the dusk, in the rain, a car honked, and then another.

How young her face had become at the last! Smooth and oval, with a half-laugh on her lips. That same half-laugh was in her voice when, three hours later, she had called Boston. "No mis-

HOMAGE TO THE FIRST GEOMETER

I

All things are water, Thales said, and meant
A universal clarity underlay
The granular, turbid, obdurant
Stones, the tendons of a child at play
In a back-yard puddle, the firmament—
That blue corneal bulge, that film blown full
Atop the rumor of an irised world—

II

Itself. All things. Off Bimini,
The broken-backed surfer drowned in surf,
Dawdling, staring down eternally
To realms of coral. The translucent leaf
Dancing in jaded sun, the 22
Whales that strong mind storied me,
Who beached themselves repeatedly

III

On a small round island—though the coast guard dragged
Them one by one with cables to the drink
Each time but the last—and died, fatigued,
Successful, bloody. All things, old Greek?
Some ambitious, over-pedagogued,
Incurious student (may he have caught a tumor)
Misunderstood your aqueous humor

IV

In his note-taking haste, laid waste a life
To unholster a meaning: I have idled
All afternoon by the floor-stove with my love,
Watching the incandescent, blue, unbridled
Rush, rush, rush of
Multiply-kernelled heat. I—sheathed like sun-
  sheathed wheat in her whose blue-green

V

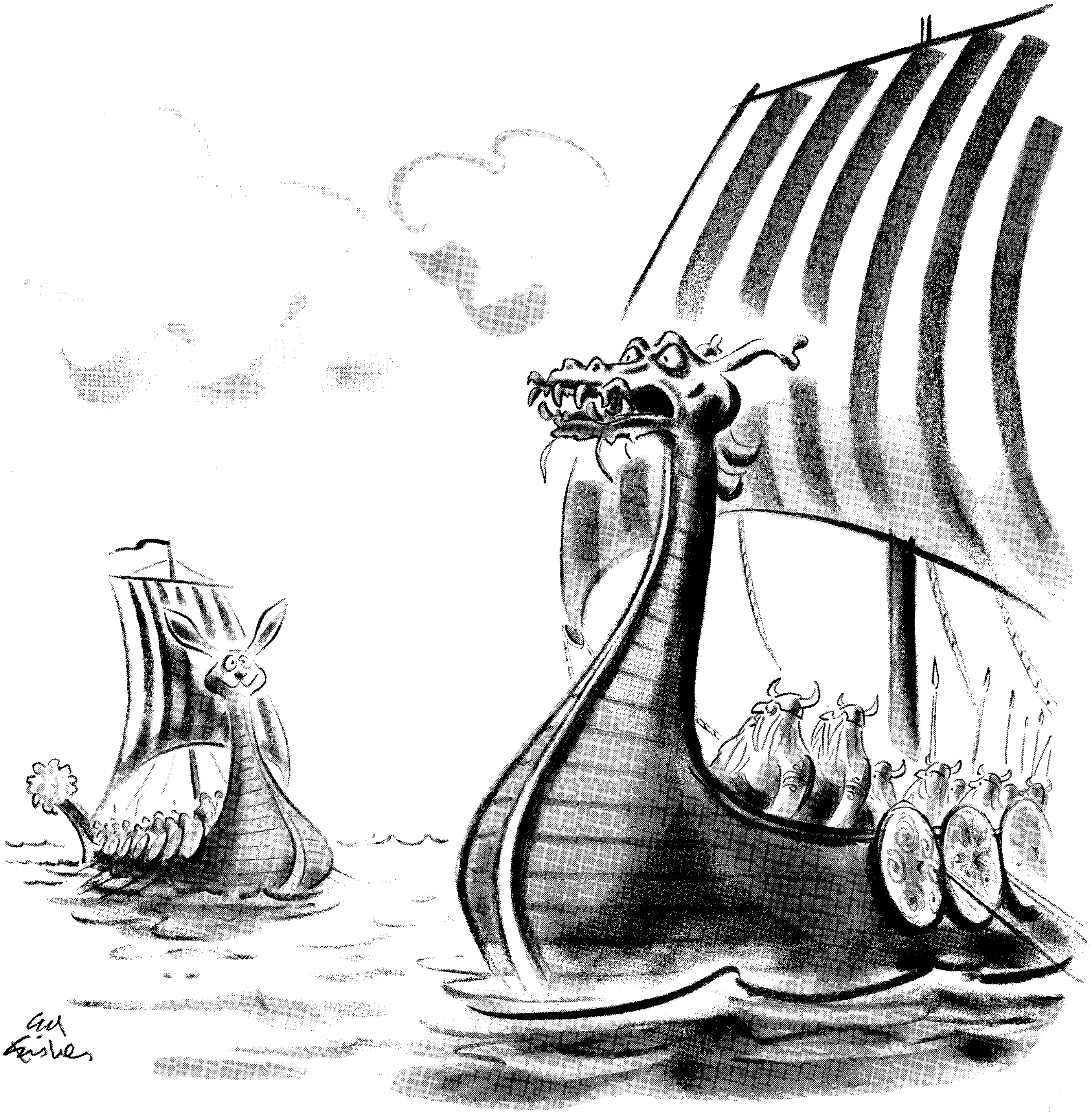
iris in a slant of late light pulsed sheer cell, sperm,
nuclei nibbling void—thought, another afternoon,
of porches, Thales, the shells of novae. You had
a laughter that fanned your genius, or else drew
sustenance. O not yet wholly gone, accept this
benison,

VI

These sprinkled drops, these votive quanta,
From one who, diametrically mistaken,
Nevertheless is going to
Subscribe to a physicist's equation—
Light as the rod of all. Where do you wander
Now, Milesian? Which spark, what star?
O Thales, Thales, Thales . . . all things are fire.

—Jack Butler

• •



"Careful, now. I don't like the looks of this."

• •

haps," she told him. "Just a thunderstorm over Newark. It got so dark I thought my eyesight was failing. I felt my age."

"How do you like it?" he had asked, of feeling one's age. He was genuinely curious. He saw her now as his forward scout in the wilderness of time.

With a lilt quite unexpected, dipping into some spring of girlish enthusiasm predating his birth, she answered, "I *hate* it!" and did laugh.

Her face, the parting kiss, his sense of perfume remained to torment him. His constant guilt had here compressed, her about-to-be-abandoned face a crystallization of the seducer's shame he had failed to feel on other, more plausible occasions.

•

A guilt-gem is a piece of the world that has volunteered for compression. Those souls around us, living our lives with us, are gaseous clouds of being awaiting a condensation and preservation—faces, lights that glimmer out, somehow not seized, save in this gesture of remorse. Sifting them through his brain, Ferguson would grow dulled to their glitter, indifferent to life and able to sleep. He had been a bully since his first cry for milk, and had continued a tyrant. He had tripped an infant playmate so the boy's head struck a radiator and gushed blood. He had told lies, about an imaginary pet dog, in Sunday school. He had teased his father, once pretending to start the car while the old man was putting a tire in the trunk, making the crowd of kids on the luncheonette steps laugh. Lord, what a treasure! Greater than Fafner's, a lode that goes down and down. Ferguson was further soothed by this discovery: in amassing these guilt-gems, in reducing the matrical terror and grave displacement of his existence to a few baubles he could, as it were, put in his pocket and jingle, he was, further, guilty.

—JOHN UPDIKE

ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

PIANIST'S PROGRESS

EVERY year, in March and June, the Juilliard School holds auditions for hundreds of musicians from all over the world who hope to be admitted as students the following fall. There is a third audition, in September, for any departments that still have openings. Juilliard is one of a large number of schools throughout the world whose purpose is to turn out performers, and the seriousness of its intentions is made clear in a paragraph of its catalogue under the heading "General Admission Requirements":

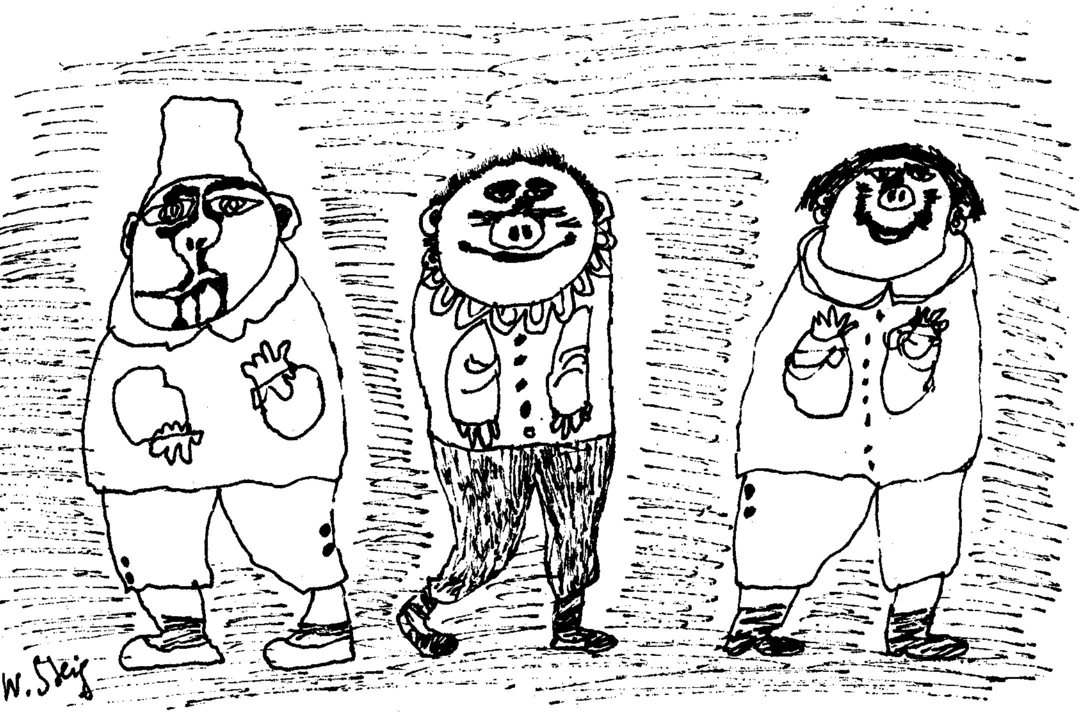
> It is assumed that any student accepted for study at Juilliard has made a total commitment to his chosen field and that, in many instances, genuine hardships and sacrifices have been made in order to begin or continue study at the School. This commitment signifies complete dedication to study, work, and performance to the best of the student's capabilities. It also demands no compromise that would affect the standard of excellence expected of the School, its faculty, and its students.

The field of music is an extremely crowded one these days. The explosion, epidemic, pandemic of performers is attributed to a variety of causes: teaching of a higher quality than was common in previous years; the easy availability to everyone of note-perfect recordings by the world's greatest artists (note-perfect because of sophisticated recording equipment that enables record producers, in conjunction with the artists, to splice together the best parts of several recording sessions, even to the point of substituting one note for another); the postwar population growth which has resulted in more entrants into every field; a hard-to-explain general superiority of the young these days, which shows itself in, among other things, new Olympic records in almost every event and a recent tendency of young musicians to bypass a few years of service in minor symphonies and go straight into major ones, such as the Chicago, the Boston, and the New York.

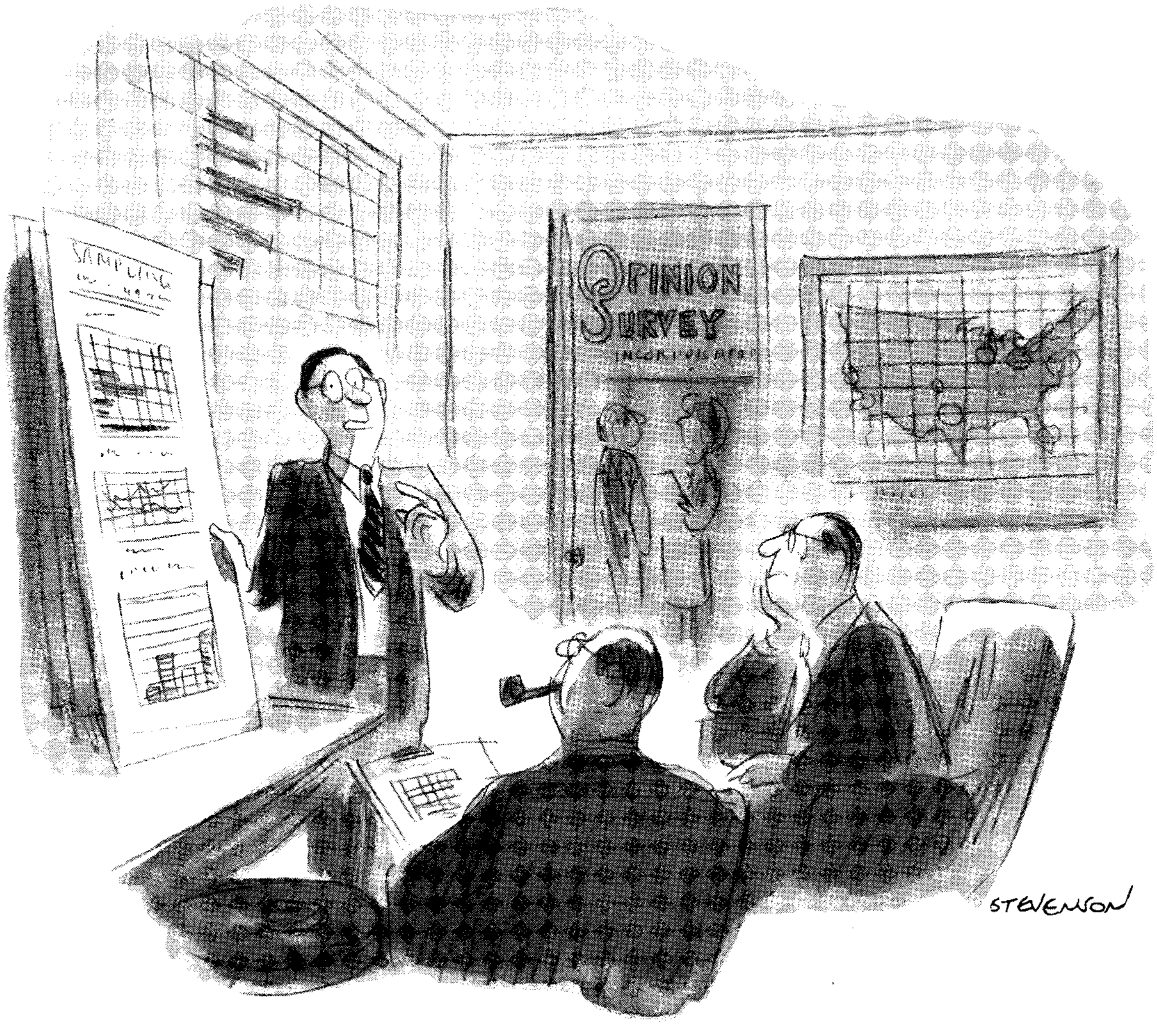
Among performers, pianists have problems that are unique. The instrument they perform on in public is never their own—exceptions to this rule being Vladimir Horowitz, Artur Rubinstein, and one or two others, who take their pianos with them wherever they play—and, for a number of reasons, it is seldom one they enjoy performing on. One reason is that pianos are not often in perfect tune. Another reason is that their action varies—it may be stiff or loose or somewhere in between. Stiff action can be tiring, but at least the performer knows what he's coping with. Loose action forces him to alter his finger technique—to decrease the speed of finger approach to the keys; keys, when they are struck, normally move slightly sideways, but with very loose action the movement becomes excessive, the result being an eerie slippery feeling. Piano keys are not always of standard measurement. Some years ago, a major piano company experimented with narrower, rounded black keys, and many pianos with these keys are still in use. The difference is enough to cause a pianist's fingers to slip off the keys or, in rapid passages, to miss them entirely. Furthermore, the white keys are now made of plastic instead of ivory, and a pianist's hands perspire during a performance, increasing the hazard of note-splitting—hitting two keys instead of one. The pedals can be sluggish, squeaky, or even nonfunctioning. And in addition to all these technical problems there are the important ones of sound. Some pianos have a harsh, brittle sound, because the felt that covers the hammers has become ridged and hard over the years. Some pianos have a powerful, rich bass but a treble range not full and bright enough to match it. The length of the piano string is determined by the size of the piano, and the longer the string, the more resonant the sound. The standard concert grand, called a D, is nine feet long. But not infrequently a B, or seven-foot, piano is the only one available. And sometimes a pianist gets an instrument that is so close to perfect in every respect—the best Steinway, an old Mason-Hamlin in mint condition, a perfect Bechstein—that he will talk about it for months afterward.

The market for pianists is limited. If they do not succeed on the concert stage—or, as is more likely, do not even get a chance to try—they cannot fit into an orchestra, as string players can, or into an opera company, as singers can. Often, they turn to teaching, and help to produce a new batch of pianists with the same goal in mind that they themselves have failed to achieve; and thus they contribute another disadvantage—a field that is even more crowded.

If a pianist has high hopes about his chances for success, being admitted to Juilliard is bound, at first, to fortify his feelings. Everything about the place lends an air of importance to the students there. The building—part of the Lincoln Center complex—at Broadway and Sixty-sixth Street,



A Dim View of Children



"This survey indicates you can fool seventeen per cent of the people a hundred per cent of the time, thirty-four per cent of the people fifty-one per cent of the time, and a hundred per cent of the people twelve per cent of the time."

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is beautiful and opulent. The marble-floored reception area alone, on the ground floor, is vast enough to accommodate the entire corps de ballet of four or five major ballet companies, all doing their pliés and entrechats. Behind a broad polished-wood reception desk sit two people: a gracious elderly woman with a phenomenal memory for faces, who keeps an eye on everybody who comes in through the double glass doors, on Sixty-sixth Street, to make sure that no one gets in who doesn't belong there, and next to her a uniformed guard, who is there for the protection of the students and also of the valuable instruments that many of them play. The building, a five-story marble structure that covers about half a city block, has wall-to-wall carpeting everywhere, and there are ample practice rooms and rehearsal halls, spacious studios for the faculty members, a perfect jewel of a theatre for the school's opera and modern-dance productions and its four orchestras' concerts, and an attractive, comfortable auditorium, Paul Hall, for the students' solo recitals. The school also has the use of Alice Tully Hall, which is in the southeast corner of the Juilliard building, for weekly student chamber-music concerts and performances by the school's orchestras.

Of the eight hundred or so students at Juilliard, about two hundred are pianists, and, according to Joseph Bloch, who teaches courses in piano literature there, and in whose classes have sat such pianists as Garrick Ohlsson, Van Cliburn, Misha Dichter, and John Browning, every one of the piano students hopes to become a concert artist. I asked Bloch recently how many of the current two hundred he felt had what it took to succeed. After thinking for a minute, he said, "Oh, twenty-five, twenty." Then he laughed and added, "But bear in mind that I'm the only one at Juilliard who said Van Cliburn would never have a career."

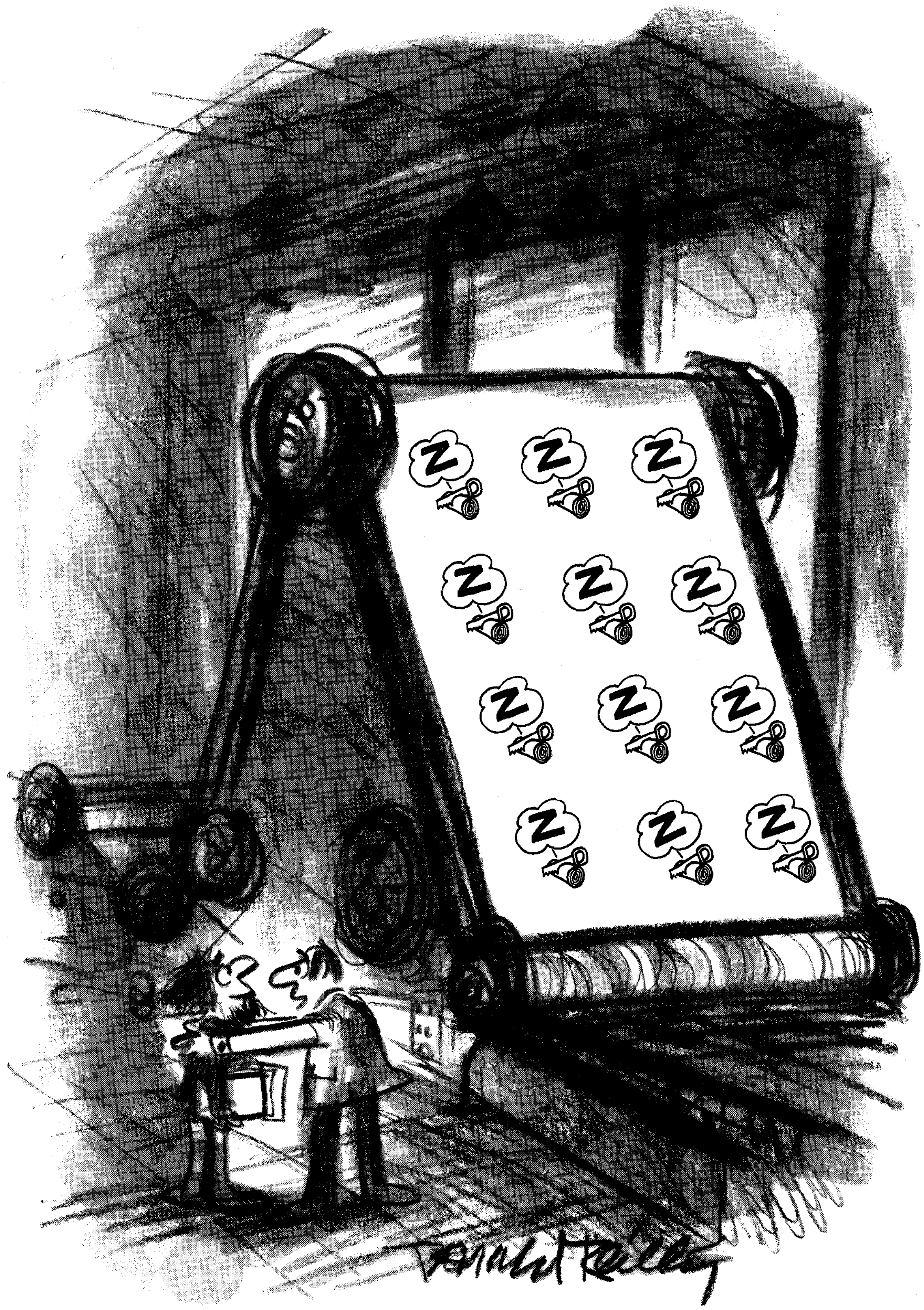
Bloch, an attractive, energetic man in his mid-fifties, who is called Jim or Jimmy by his family and friends, tried for a performing career himself when he came to New York from Indianapolis, where he was born. He made his début in Town Hall in 1950 and got favorable reviews. In those days, there were seven daily newspapers in Manhattan, and a performer could count on five or six reviews—enough to make or break him if they were strong in either direction. Bloch had become friends with Virgil Thomson, the American composer and critic, and Thomson suggested that if he gave a New York recital every year for five years something good might come of it. In 1951, Bloch, presenting his second recital, geared his program to please the critics who had reviewed him before—picked composers they were known to like. But he got ambiguous reviews, and abandoned Thomson's five-year plan. Instead of continuing to assault the music fortress that is New York, he toured in the United States, Europe, New Zealand, Australia, and Japan in the fifties and sixties. He began teaching at Juilliard in 1948, and has been a visiting professor at schools in Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand, Korea, and Japan. In addition, he has played in such disparate places as Colorado and Calcutta, Taiwan and Tahiti. Bloch has also given several New York recitals since the 1951 disappointment, but his pleasure in music, travel, and a good life seems to preclude the fanaticism necessary for a major concert artist's career.

Although Bloch's piano-literature classes are required, his students consider themselves lucky to be in them. He is a storehouse of knowledge about different periods, composers, and styles, and the classes, always informative and often intense, are enjoyable and sometimes exhilarating. He is a warm, compassionate man, outside the private teacher-pupil relationship in music, which, in intensity, falls somewhere between that of parent and child, or analyst and analysand, and can be extremely painful and trying. Piano students like to play their recital program for him—or, at least, a certain piece—because his advice on fine points of interpretation is invaluable.

I asked Bloch why he had had reservations about Cliburn, and he said, "He auditioned here when he was sixteen, and he played the Liszt Twelfth 'Hungarian' Rhapsody so beautifully I still remember it vividly. But as the years went by and I watched his progress, it seemed to me that he had no intellectual curiosity about piano repertoire, and I felt that that would be a severe handicap to a career."

IN the fall of 1973, I became interested in the problems of student pianists, and how they go about trying for a career, when I met Robin McCabe, one of Juilliard's two hundred. Juilliard has no dormitory facilities, and a pupil from out of town either pairs up with another student to rent an apartment or lives in a residential hotel or takes a room with kitchen privileges in a private apartment—preferably somewhere in the vicinity of Juilliard. Robin and another Juilliard pianist, Richard Fields, each rented a room in the duplex apartment of Jane Harris, a pianist friend of mine who lived off Central Park West two blocks north of the school. Robin spent her days at the school—from eight in the morning, when it opens, until ten at night, when it closes. Sundays, when it is locked for the day, were spent in a frantic search for a piano to practice on. I rarely saw Richard. Pianists come to Juilliard to study with a particular teacher or they take their chances, but, once they have been assigned to a teacher, they are committed. Changing teachers—especially in mid-year—requires a strong ego and the tact of a diplomat; the student must find another teacher who is willing to take him at the risk of alienating the current teacher, and must get a release from the current teacher, who may feel well rid of him but angered or embarrassed at what might appear to be a public rebuke. Richard was a quiet, rather shy young man from Boston—fresh out of high school and younger than Robin—and he was unhappy with his teacher, who overwhelmed him in general and verbally scalded him when he did not live up to her expectations; he frequently slept half the day away in escape from the trauma awaiting him at school.

Robin used the upstairs door of Jane's apartment, and sometimes when I was there visiting she would come downstairs to tell us something funny that had happened at school or talk about a con-



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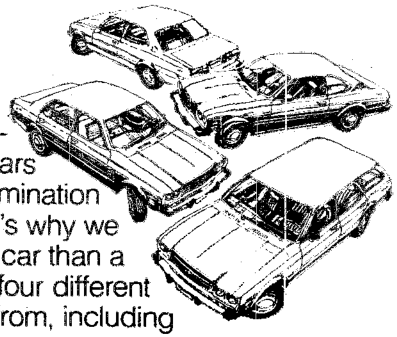

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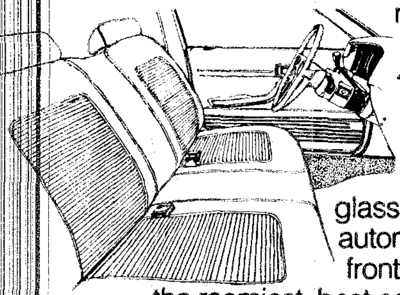

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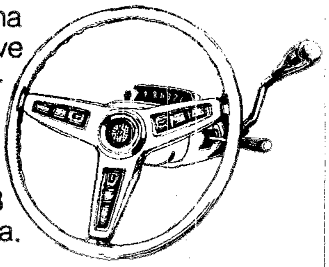

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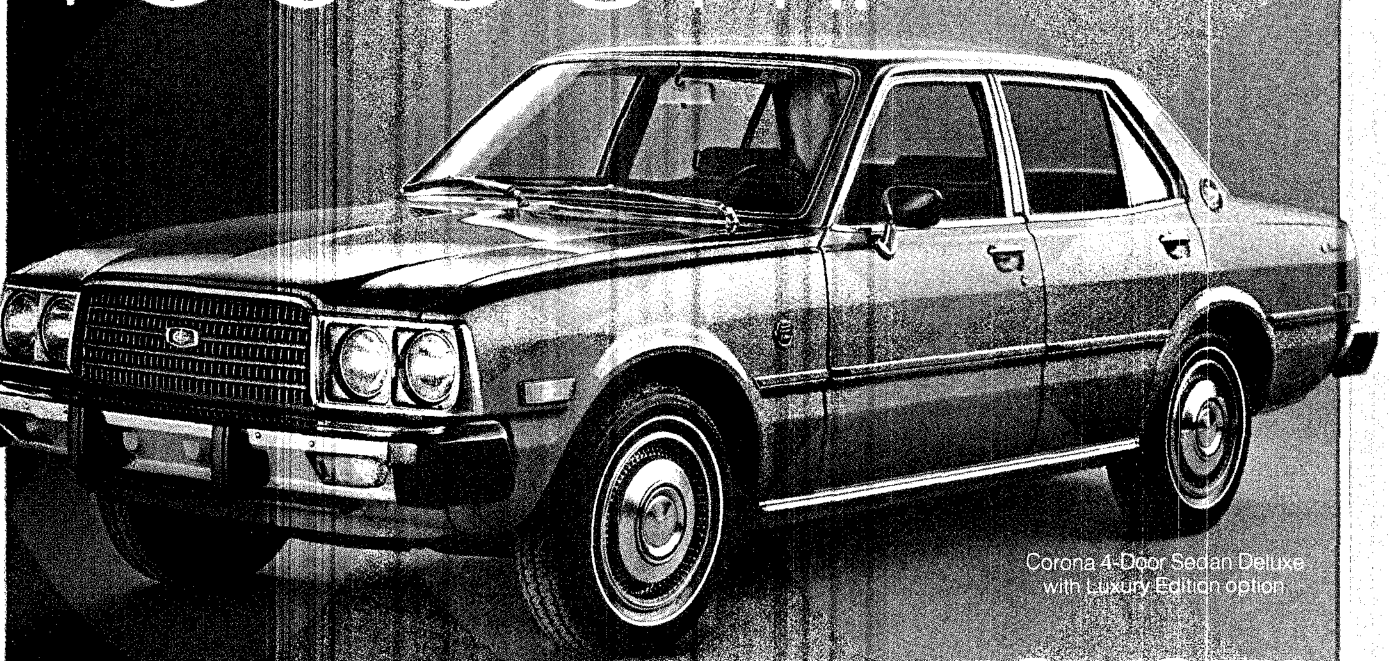

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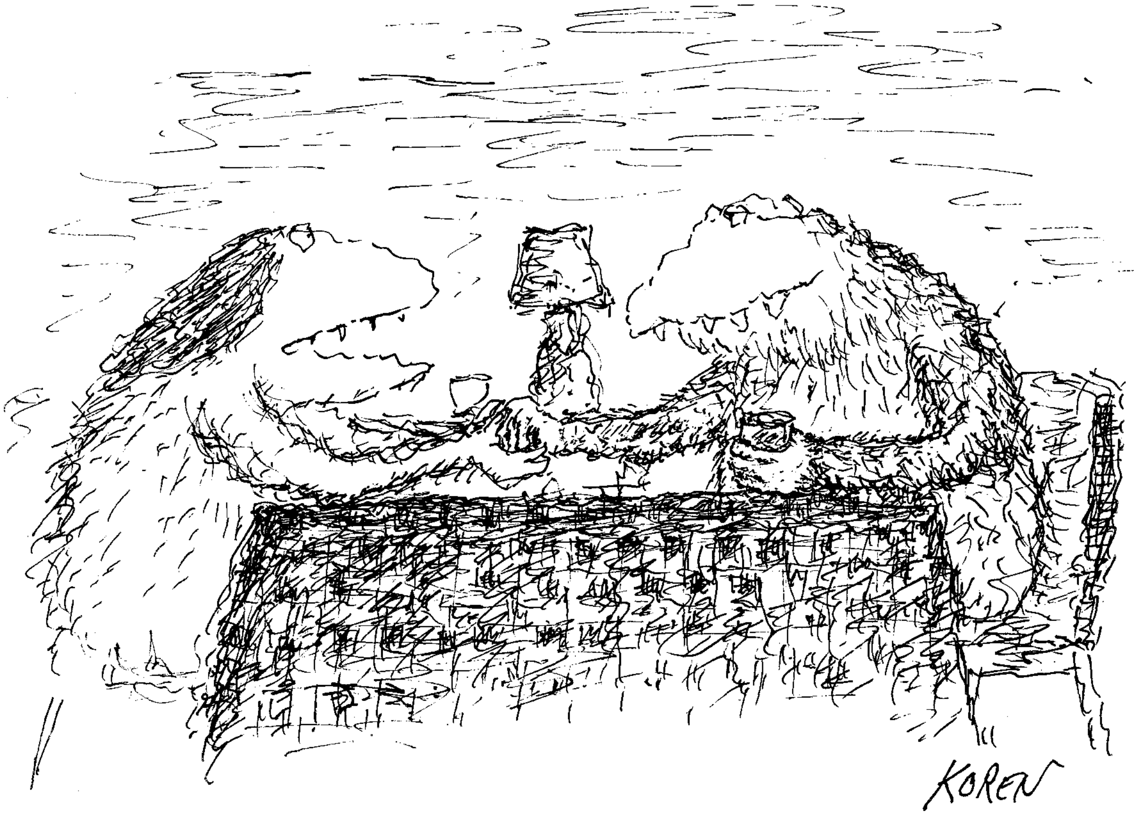
cert she was going to give. She was one of two pupils of the brilliant Czech pianist Rudolf Firkusny, and one of eight students in Juilliard's new doctoral program. Robin is a beautiful girl, with green eyes, high cheekbones, a soft, perfect complexion, and black curly hair that frames her face and touches her shoulders. At the time I met her, she wore demure dresses that her mother bought for her, and looked more like a Katharine Gibbs secretary than like a talented, many-faceted musician. When she smiled, which was often, there was a sparkle in her eyes, and when she laughed her cheeks dimpled, though her face in repose sometimes looked sad.



"William, do you have the courage to love?"

One night in the spring of 1974, I ran into Robin on the street. Her cheeks were pink after a fast sprint from school, where she had been practicing. I hadn't seen her in some time, and I asked how things were going. She said, "I'm competing in the Concert Artists Guild competition right now, and the finals are tomorrow. After that, I'll tell you." As it turned out, she was a winner. Each year, the Concert Artists Guild awards up to ten first prizes of a New York début in Carnegie Recital Hall to an assortment of string players, singers, ensembles (woodwinds, strings, and brass), and one or two pianists. The year Robin entered, there were, in the opinion of the judges, few string players—and no violinists—ready for a début recital. As a result, the Guild chose four piano winners from a field of eighty-one: Robin; Alan Weiss, who was Firkusny's other pupil; Gary Steigerwalt, a third Juilliard student, who was a pupil of Irwin Freundlich; and David Northington, from Yale University. In many cases, the judges—six well-known pianists and a critic for *High Fidelity*, Harris Goldsmith—simply wrote "Yes" or "No" in commenting on the performances; sometimes they went into detail about what they thought of each contestant's playing. Robin was happy to see not only that the judges' "Yes"es for her were unanimous—many with exclamation marks—but also that Goldsmith, whose opinion she especially valued, on the basis of his record reviews, had written about her, "Yes! A true performer, plays with strength and distinction. Good pedal. Clearly focussed. Ravel: Intense and mysterious. Chopin played in grand manner. Falla: Huge crescendos brilliantly done, rhythmic tension even in the face of technical complexities." Robin's début was set for April 1, 1975.

After the competition, I managed to talk to Robin several times and learn something about her background. No one is busier or less accessible than serious music students. They are either in a class or practicing. And Robin, while working hard at Juilliard, was trying to support herself. She had decided after she graduated from college to accept as little money as possible from her parents. She felt that they had already done enough for her, and, besides, they had two other daughters to see through school. Robin taught Thursday afternoons at the Harlem School of the Arts, at St. Nicholas Avenue and 141st Street. She also got lots of nonclassical playing jobs. She had always been able to play by ear, and, through her ease at the piano and her thorough familiarity with chord structure and harmony, had evolved a wonderful style with popular music—something she calls soft jazz. The student-services office at Juilliard was sometimes asked for the name of a student who could play popular music, and the office would often recommend Robin. She had played at a number of consulate parties and at a birthday party for Senator Jacob Javits, and as word spread she began to get almost more work than she could handle. She once told me that while she was playing on such occasions she every now and then found herself reflecting that maybe no one would give her nearly as much—or anything—for playing a Beethoven sonata.

In June of 1971, when Robin was twenty-one, she came to New York from Puyallup, Washington, a small town near Seattle, to audition for admission to Juilliard's graduate program. She had just graduated summa cum laude from the University of Washington, in Seattle, where she had majored in music. Béla Siki, her piano teacher there, had suggested the move to New York. Robin had already achieved considerable success as a pianist in the Northwest; she had won almost every regional competition she entered, and had given a number of recitals. (Siki, who was born in Budapest in 1923, had studied with Ernst von Dohnányi and become the protégé of the Rumanian pianist Dinu Lipatti. When Lipatti, one of Europe's great pianists and the nonpareil interpreter of Chopin, died tragically at the age of thirty-three, Siki took charge of his students. Now, in addition to teaching in Washington, he tours Europe annually, giving solo recitals and performing with orchestras.) Siki told Robin that for a serious musician New York was the only place from which to approach a career. Also, Robin knew that, because of the vast number of musicians in every country and the intensely competitive nature of the business, very few can make a living out of performing alone; almost every artist is affiliated with a school and teaches at least part time. In recent years, schools have begun to require advanced degrees of their performing faculty members, and a degree from Juilliard carries a lot of weight.

Robin is the oldest of three children of Dr. and Mrs. Edward McCabe. The family is an exceptionally close one. When Robin came to New York for the audition, she knew no one here. A local travel agent naïvely suggested a West Side hotel near Juilliard. It was a run-down, shabby, depressing place, but Robin, not knowing where else to go, stayed there nevertheless. She admits to having been acutely lonely. She says that the audition was brief and, she felt, very cold. "You play for seven members of the piano faculty," she told me. "They let you play about fifteen minutes at the most, and it's all chopped up. They interrupt and ask to hear parts of different pieces, and then you're dismissed with 'Thank you. You'll be hearing from us.' You are given theory exams, but I've since learned that they're purely for placement. Someone who couldn't draw a treble clef would still get in if he played well enough. The Juilliard faculty members are interested in raw talent. If you're deficient in theory, they'll give you remedial counterpoint and so on. But the audition is everything." During the three days Robin was in New York, she took in as many tourist attractions as she could—the Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty, the Staten Island Ferry—reasoning that if she wasn't accepted at Juilliard it would be her last chance for a long time to see the city.

Robin received word late in June that she had been accepted, and she returned in the fall and stayed at the Y until she found a room, in the West Nineties. She was almost overwhelmed by Juilliard at first—it was so big; the teachers, many of them concert artists, seemed formidable; and the number and quality of the students made her have severe doubts about herself. For a while, she was ambivalent about even considering a career. She told me one day, "I just thought, Please, God, let me get my degree and I'll leave, I promise. I'll get out. No static." (Robin grew up a Catholic, and she occasionally makes references to her religion and frequently, half kiddingly, speaks directly to God.) Now she laughed at the memory. "I felt like such a transplant. I knew that I was up against a tremendous current of people who were already in the mainstream—and New York *is* the musical mainstream. I didn't even have any contacts. I felt that if I could get a degree, at least I wouldn't have wasted a lot of money. For a couple of months, I was terribly intimidated and homesick. I walked around school not daring to talk to anyone." She paused for a few seconds, and went on, "I had an incredible experience my first month at school. I was practicing one day, and a man came into my room and asked if I was a student there. I thought, Oh, my God, I sound so bad he thinks I don't even *go* to Juilliard. I told him I was, and he left. I found out much later that he was the piano technician, and that it was his habit to check on new faces. It seems funny now, but at the time it really upset me."

Robin thinks of the piano students at Juilliard as falling into three categories—big guns, medium-sized guns, and little guns—and during her first two years there she definitely considered herself one of the little guns. Partly from shyness and partly from a lifelong habit of hard work, she made few friends at first and concentrated on piano. She studied with the teacher whom Béla Siki had recommended—Ilona Kabos. Robin said of her, "She was Hungarian, and an excellent teacher, though she was extremely tempestuous. She used to scream at me—lots of Hungarian histrionics—but she was good for me. She liked my playing but felt I needed more chutzpah—needed to come out more. She pushed me quite a bit. I remember one lesson in particular. It was a hot spring day. I was playing the last measures of the Liszt A-Major Concerto. There are tremendous, blazing octave passages—*very* hard. The heat bothered me, my hair was falling in my face, and I was flubbing a lot of notes. I finally said, 'I don't know what's wrong with me. I keep missing it. It's so dirty, messy,' and she said, '*Dar*ling, really, if you would just lean back and get your bosom out of the way.'" Robin laughed. "She was right. I was leaning too far forward." She added, "Mme. Kabos often told me she was disappointed in me—she was often very rough on me. I was highly demolishable at the time, and I don't think she knew how much she hurt me. I would go back to my room and beat myself mentally. But it would be better the next time. In the middle of my second year, she got very sick. We didn't know it at the time, but it was cancer. She returned to her home in London, and we all knew, somehow, that she wouldn't be back. I felt awfully depressed about it, and for a while I didn't study with anyone. But then I heard that Firkusny was coming back to Juilliard—he had taught there years ago—and was going to take two pupils. Siki knew Firkusny and recommended me, and I'll always be grateful. He's a wonderful person—much softer than Mme. Kabos. He arouses a tremendous conscience in a student, without saying that something is wretched. He says, 'This could be better,' and you know that in his understated way he's saying, 'This is really lacking. You'd better get going and show me something better.' But he can be articulate, concrete, and very, very helpful." Her thoughts returned to Mme. Kabos, and she said, "She was a great lady—a *grande dame*, in the tradition of Rosina Lhevinne and Ania Dorfmann. She is very much missed."

IN the fall of 1972, before returning to Juilliard from a summer of teaching at the University of Washington and lessons with Siki, Robin entered the Twenty-eighth Geneva Concours International, at Siki's suggestion. Almost every country in Europe has its own *concours*, and Siki picked the one in Geneva for Robin because he had friends there she could stay with. Robin had competed many times in the Northwest, but this was to be the first time on an international scale; the rules would be different and the competition, needless to say, much stiffer. The Geneva Concours admits contestants on the basis of what Robin calls "propaganda"—contests won, teachers studied with, letters of recommendation from music-department chairmen. Some competitions require a tape from the contestant, but the Geneva does not. All have specific repertoire requirements, and the Geneva's were

ON
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ninety minutes of solo playing, including works representative of the baroque, classic, Romantic, and modern periods. No competition is for the nervous or the squeamish. Contestants in the Geneva preliminaries and the semifinals are rarely permitted to finish anything they start. They are constantly being interrupted by the judges—a panel of the best pianists that the competition can get—and asked to play something else. Thus, they leap from composer to composer, from period to period, hoping to communicate something—to convey some degree of musicianship and technique. At the Geneva, the judges sat behind a curtain for the first round, and the pianists were given numbers. Blind judging is standard procedure in many contests—to keep the competition honest—but Robin found it unnerving. She said, "They sit behind this big green curtain. Not only that, when you come out to play—this big preliminary you've travelled thousands of miles for—they won't let you warm up with scales. Everyone is given the same piece to play. They fear that a contestant might start with a four-octave B-major scale in thirds, say, and it could be a signal to a judge. I have to admit, though, that when everyone plays the same piece it can be very telling."

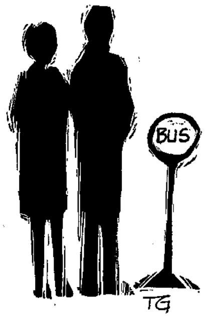
Robin said that at first she felt almost paralyzed with fear. The number assigned her was 33, and she made the association that it was appropriate because Christ was crucified when he was thirty-three. Now she laughs at the connection—calls it all her Catholic guilt coming out. She said, "During the preliminaries, we were waiting backstage, and there was a Yugoslavian boy who had brought along a portable silent keyboard with a weight attached to each key, to regulate the action. He was sitting there in front of all us victims, a cigarette hanging out of his mouth, and he was practicing madly. It was *so* disconcerting. I wished I had one, too. I saw him afterward and asked him how it went, and he said glumly, 'It didn't.' And he was right—he didn't get past the preliminaries. Sometimes you just know. You can have a memory slip and not make a quick recovery, and you know you're washed up—you've had it."

There were about ninety-five pianists at the Geneva Concours. The judges narrowed the field to twenty, and then to ten. Second, third, and fourth prizes were awarded, but no first. Robin was the only American among the ten finalists—a Concours laureate. She was pleased but not elated, and, typically, went in search of criticism of her playing, so that she could profit from the experience. She was told that one judge did not like her Beethoven; he said that it had an American accent. She said to me, "Now, that's a comment that I think is absolutely meaningless. It doesn't help me at all. I came away not knowing what was really wrong. I have an inkling that he meant I didn't play in the German Sturm und Drang style—you know, *heavy*, *heavy*. I do know that every one of the judges was European. There wasn't one American." The prizes for the laureates were recitals in Victoria Hall, in Geneva, and after Robin's recital *Le Journal* said of her, in part, "Excellent pianism . . . and a sensitive, beautifully revealed musicianship."

Memory slips are the bane of many performers, and I asked Robin if they were a problem for her.

She said, "I've had a few, but not in a long time. I had one once during a concert in Spokane. Somebody in the first row took a picture of me. I was playing the Beethoven 'Waldstein' Sonata, and the flash broke my concentration and I was gone—lost. So I improvised for what seemed like twenty minutes but was closer to twenty seconds, and then I found my place again. After the concert, my mother said it sounded like Debussy and Gershwin. I'm not sure anyone else even noticed, but it upset me so much I threw up. That was the last time it happened to me, but I'm still aware of the danger.

"One time, I played the Schumann Concerto in A Minor with a Canadian orchestra. The concerto starts with a unison E in the orchestra, and the piano enters with a dramatic rapid chordal passage. I went onstage, adjusted the piano bench, and sat for a moment, to compose myself. We'd had two rehearsals, and I was ready. There was a large audience, and suddenly I couldn't remember the very first chord. I blanked out—mistrusted everything. I thought, Oh, my God, I don't even know where to *begin.* I wiped the keys with my handkerchief, tried to look busy. The conductor was watching me, and I was having a total coronary. I imagined that the audience was getting restless. Finally, my mind completely blank, I nodded to the conductor to begin. I heard the orchestra E, and my hands went for the right chord. Total intuition, and I was all right. But if I had tried to intellectualize I would still be sitting there."



Robin told me about another concert in Canada—different concerto, different orchestra. "I did the Saint-Saëns Concerto No. 2 in G Minor. It starts out with solo piano. The orchestra doesn't come in for a minute or so. The piano part begins with an emphatic octave leading into a grandiose, romantic theme. The hall was huge and almost filled. The conductor nodded to me to start. I struck the octave and the piano rolled away from me. I moved the stool forward and tried to keep playing, but the piano moved again. It was on a dolly, and there was a slight incline in the stage." She shrugged helplessly. "I didn't know what to do. I looked at the conductor, and he had his hand over his mouth. The concertmaster had his bow across his face. The hall was pin-dropping quiet. I looked out at the audience and started to laugh, and then everyone laughed—roared. A stagehand came out and put blocks under the rollers. The next day, the critic couldn't resist calling it 'A Moving Performance.' "

ROBIN's first doctoral recital—she would give three such recitals all told, within the next two years—was scheduled for May 17, 1974, in Paul Hall, and immediately after the Concert Artists Guild competition she began serious work on her recital program. On May 8th, Bloch arranged for her and the two other C.A.G. winners from the school's pianists to play for Everett Lee, the newly appointed conductor of the Symphony of the New World, at Juilliard. The symphony gave a series of four concerts in Avery Fisher Hall each year, and Lee was looking for a young soloist. The opportunity to play with an orchestra in a big hall in New York is every young artist's dream—second only to having a manager—and Robin interrupted work on her recital to spend a couple of hours polishing the Rachmaninoff "Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini." It was solidly in her repertoire, but she had not played it for several months. She had thought of skipping the playoff—it might be a waste of time—but it seemed too big a chance to pass up.

Bloch had invited me to listen, and he met me at the Juilliard reception desk at four o'clock. As usual, he moved through the school at a half trot, but, with recitals coming up, he was stopped frequently by students, who would tug at his sleeve or stand in his way to ask, "Mr. Bloch, can you hear my Bach before next week?" or "Will you listen to my Mozart?" or "Can I play the Bartók for you?" He told each of them to call him the next day. The audition for Lee was to be held in Bloch's studio, on the fifth floor. The conductor had not arrived, and Bloch led me into the studio next to his, and introduced me to Ania Dorfmann, and then went outside to wait for Lee.

Mme. Dorfmann, one of Juilliard's best teachers, had a successful career as a concert pianist—a rarity for a woman some years ago. She was one of the few women asked by Toscanini to appear as soloist with his symphony, and their recording of the Beethoven First Concerto is a collectors' item. Some people feel that the conductor was challenging the soloist and that she more than met the challenge, with the result that the last movement is taken at a precedent-setting speed. In her studio there are a number of autographed photographs of famous musicians—handsomely framed and mounted on pedestals—including several of Toscanini. Mme. Dorfmann, who was born in Russia in 1899, is a petite, stunning woman with piercing sapphire-blue eyes that seem to miss nothing. She is quick-witted and fast to speak, and often, according to some of her students, she can be quite cutting. She undoubtedly has reason to be. Mme. Dorfmann gives her life to teaching, and she has much to offer her pupils, but some of them, for various, often emotional, reasons, don't respond and make the progress she feels they can and hopes they will.

Mme. Dorfmann was a chain smoker until recently, and she was smoking when I met her. In a few minutes, she said, she would be going down to the Juilliard Theatre to help judge a concerto contest. Four or five times a year, Juilliard piano students compete to play a specific concerto with the school's or-

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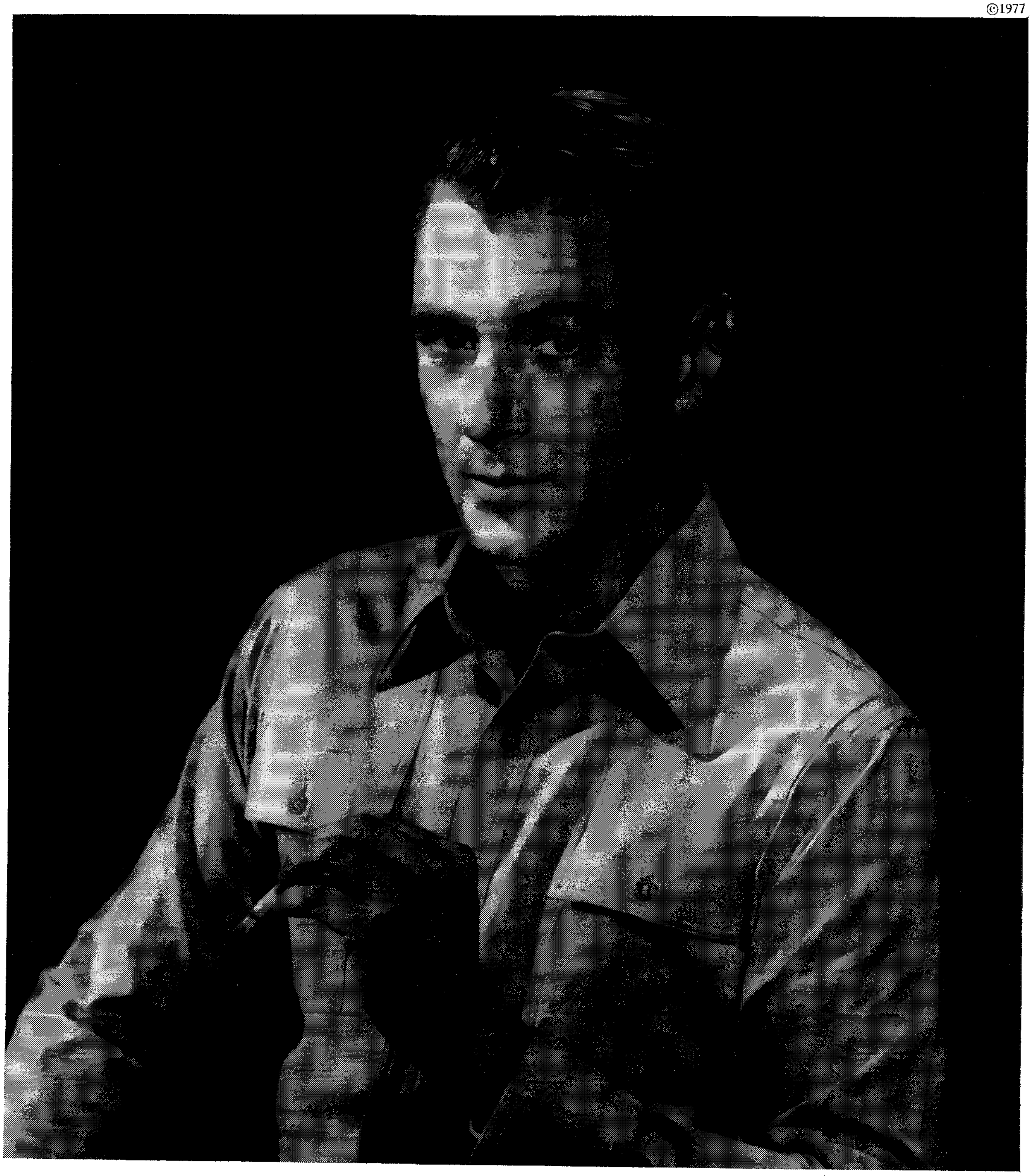

Photograph by George Hurrell

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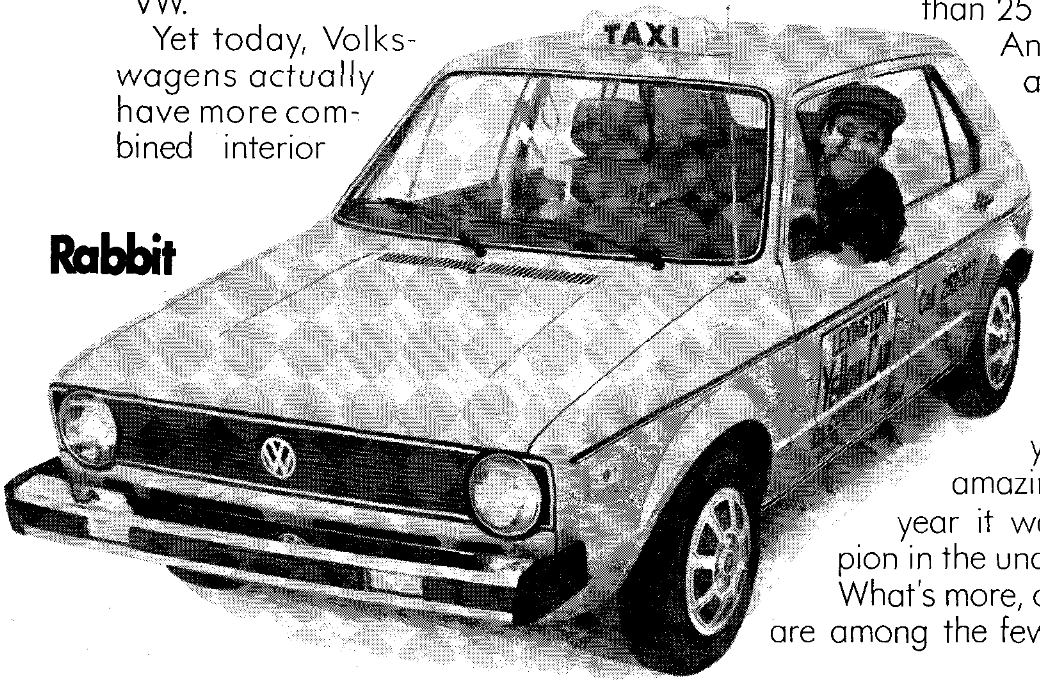

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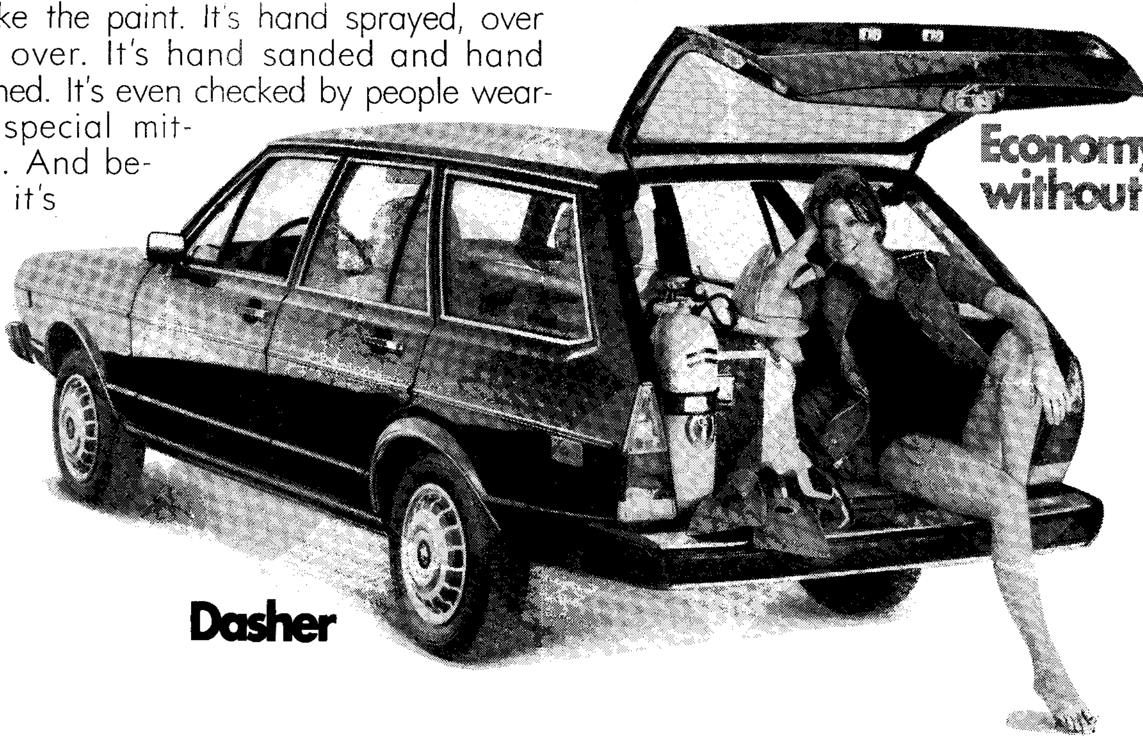

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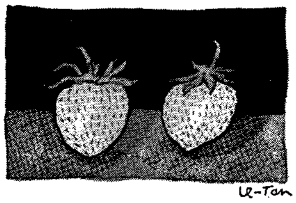
chestras. Mme. Dorfmann said, "It won't take long this time. There are only three pianists, because the concerto is the Prokofieff Second—very difficult. Last time, the concerto was the Chopin F Minor, and there were eighteen. One of my pupils is playing today. He will not win." She put her cigarette out, lit another, and added dryly, "He should not. My pupils always want to play what the other one is playing. What is in the other basket always looks better."

Bloch now beckoned to me from the doorway. Lee had arrived, he told me, and the playoff would begin. Out in the hall, sitting on the floor, talking and laughing and looking like three young men relaxing after a game of touch football, were Alan Weiss, Gary Steigerwalt, and James Barbagallo, a pianist who would play the orchestra parts for the three contestants. Barbagallo is a handsome, engaging young man, and Bloch had told me that he had a promising future—that he was a big talent. Inside Bloch's studio, which has two Steinway grands facing each other and two rows of chairs for his piano-literature classes, were Lee and Martin Canin, a member of the piano faculty. Alan played a movement from the Brahms Second Concerto, and Gary did a movement of a Mozart concerto. Robin, looking drawn and pale and tired, was last. Lee, as he had with the others, asked her to tell him something about herself. She smiled and said, "I brought you a copy of my propaganda." She handed it to him and said, "I know you're very busy, so we've worked out a fifteen-minute capsule of the Rachmaninoff. If we leave out any of your favorite variations, just tell us, and we'll be happy to do them for you." The Rachmaninoff was the most romantic, dramatic music played that afternoon, and Robin did it with power, intensity, and obvious love. She was the first to get applause from Canin and Bloch, and Lee applauded and said, "Bravo! Bravo!"

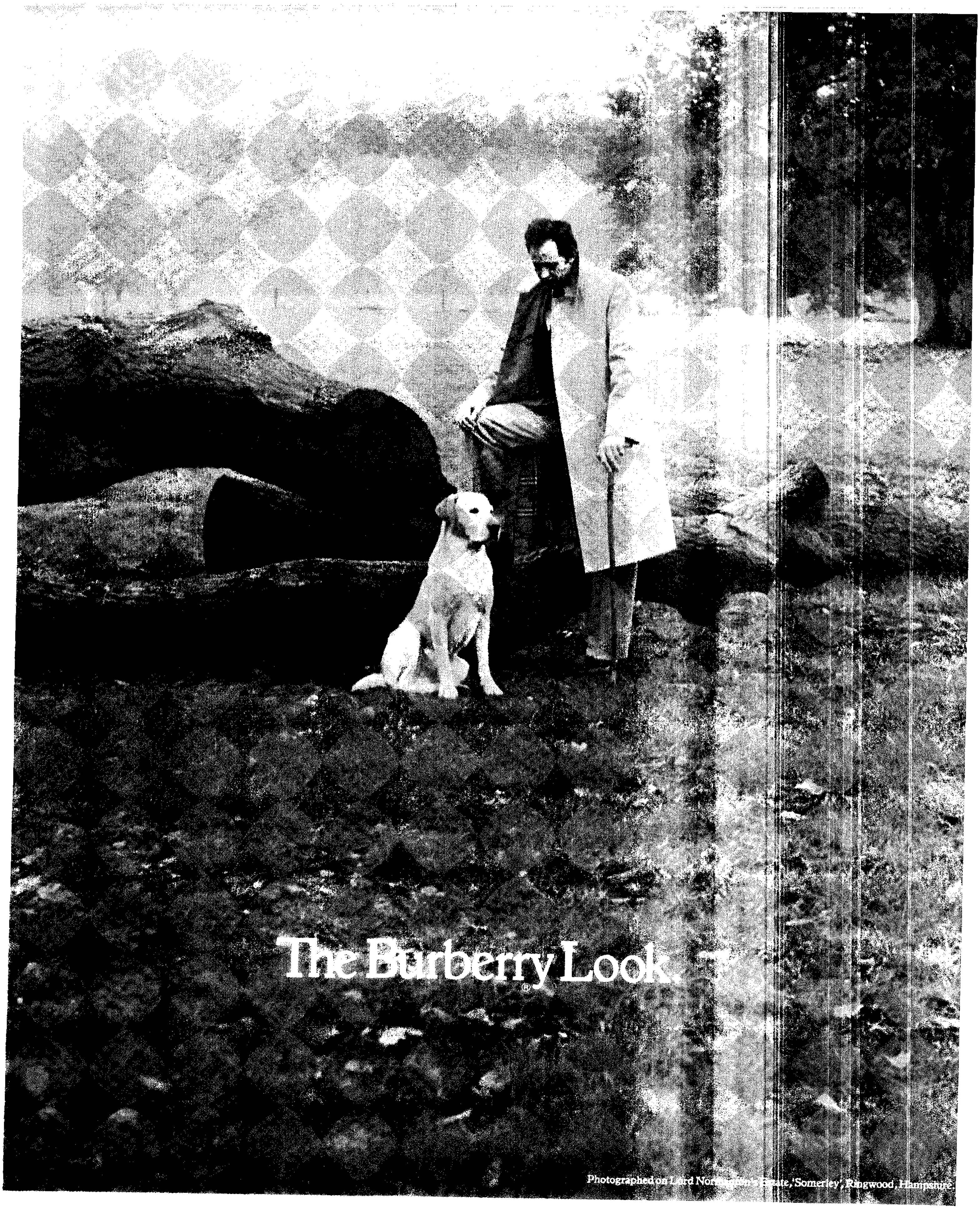


After Robin left, Lee said that all three had played well and that he would have liked to hear Gary do something other than the Mozart. (The composer whom many people consider the greatest of them all can sound tame sandwiched between two lusher works, though not, one would think, to a conductor.) It turned out that Lee intended to hear a number of string players and singers who had won competitions, and he told Bloch that he would be in touch with him. Eventually, I learned, Lee chose a sixteen-year-old pianist from New Jersey whom he had heard of by word of mouth.

I said goodbye to Bloch and went to the practice floor—the fourth—to look for Robin. It is a labyrinth of winding corridors lined with lockers and many small rooms. I asked a young girl in bluejeans and a Beethoven sweatshirt, who was pacing up and down and shaking her arms as if to rid them of numbness, whether she knew where Robin was. She pointed down a hall and said, "All the way and turn left. She's almost always in the last room."

The practice rooms all have, in addition to wall-to-wall carpeting, heavy drapes to absorb the sound of the grand pianos. I found Robin and went in. She was working on one of her encores, the Liszt "Gnomenreigen" Étude, in F-sharp. She stumbled in one passage, stopped, rapidly played an F-sharp-major four-octave scale three times, returned to the difficult passage, and played it flawlessly. I told her that she had apparently done well in the playoff. She looked pleased and said, "It was a long shot, and maybe nothing will come of it, but it was worth a try. I had some doubts about the Rachmaninoff—that truncated version—but I'm happy with how it went. Right now, I'm too tired to play one more note, so I'm going to take a break and get something to eat. Then maybe I can keep going until ten o'clock." She picked up her shoulder bag and turned off the light, and we started down the hall to the elevators.

A friend of Robin's, Roman Markowicz, popped out of a practice room and stopped us. Roman, a pupil of Mme. Dorfmann, was born in Poland and came to America when he was twenty-one. His European dress and manner give him an almost staid, stuffy appearance, which is immediately alleviated when he speaks. He greeted Robin with a gallant hand kiss. A friend of both students was performing that night in Carnegie Recital Hall, and Roman was trying to decide whether to go or to stay and practice. He, too, had a recital coming up, but he was faced with a problem: Paul Hall was solidly booked through the end of the semester, and there was no place for him to play. Robin offered to bring him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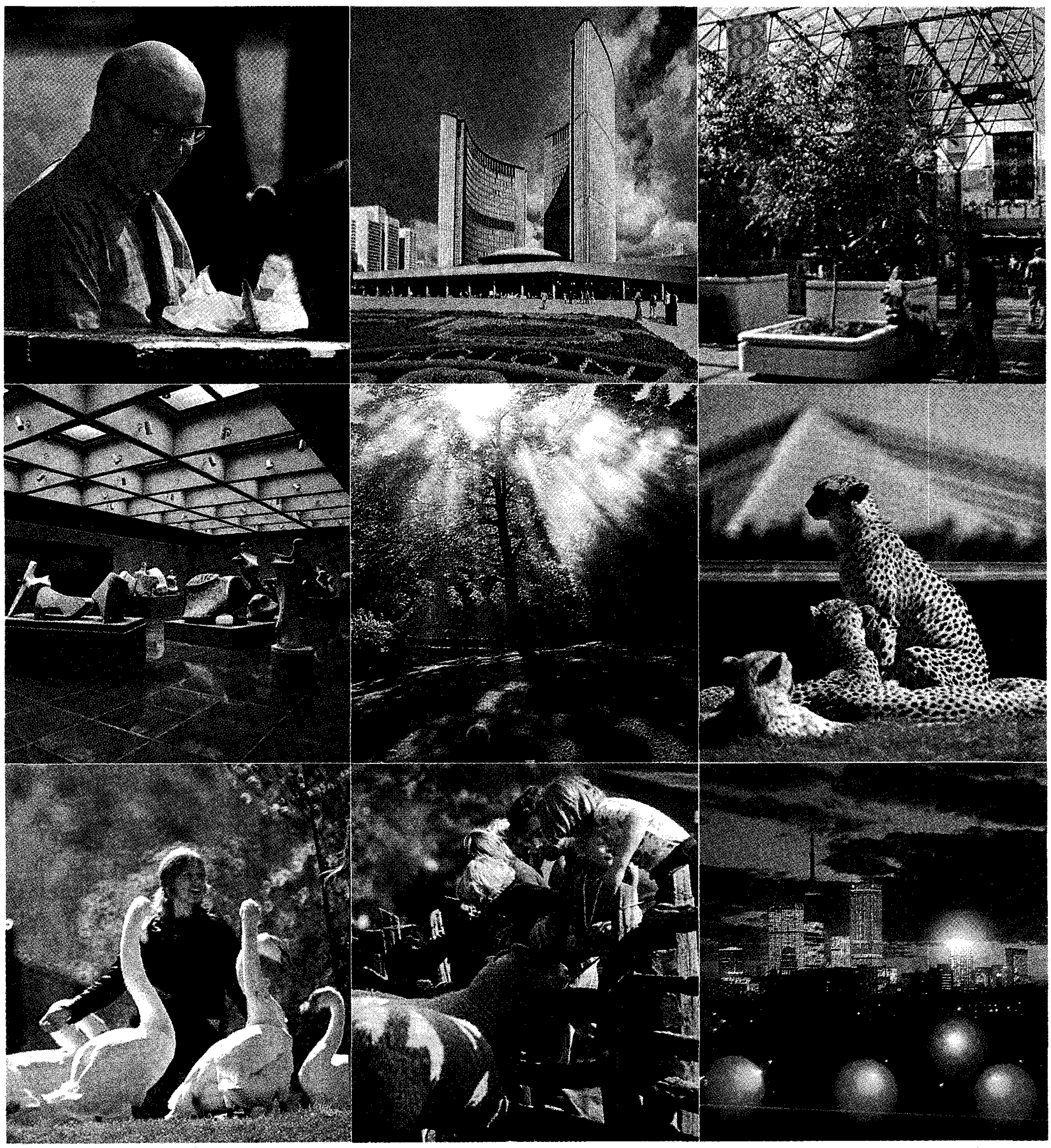

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coffee, but he declined. He said that he thought he would go and hear part of the recital and then come back to school to practice. There is an element of timelessness on the practice floor at Juilliard—an almost palpable seductive pull toward the piano—and it is easy to imagine that if the school did not close at ten the students would practice until they dropped.

A bulletin board next to the elevators was covered with overlapping announcements of recitals. Some were decorated with hand-painted flowers, and on several was printed, in large, colorful letters, "*Please* come!" Robin said everyone was so busy at that time of the year that no performers could expect much of a turnout beyond family and friends and, in some cases, a few faculty members. Faculty members are especially busy, and tend to go only to their own pupils' recitals and possibly one or two others when the performers are rumored to have made great progress during the year. Outside Juilliard, Robin paused to enjoy the fresh spring evening. She seemed to exist on hamburgers, and said that she had planned to go to McDonald's on Seventy-first Street but had changed her mind and would go to Smiler's, instead. It was just around the corner and wouldn't take as long.

ONE problem that young musicians studying with pianists of the stature of Firkusny have is that their teachers are often on tour, and so it happened that Robin had made her way through the Concert Artists Guild competition and was completing work on her doctoral recital without her teacher's help. During Firkusny's absence, she had sought opinions from other pupils, and had played parts of her program—the Chopin "Funeral March" Sonata, in B-flat minor, and the Beethoven Sonata in E Flat Major—for a friend of Jane Harris's, the pianist Mitchell Andrews. The rest of her program would consist of Three Burlesques of Béla Bartók; two Schubert-Liszt transcriptions; a Schumann-Liszt lieder transcription; and the entire Ravel "Miroirs." On Wednesday, May 15th, at eleven o'clock in the morning, Robin was to have her first lesson with Firkusny in over six weeks, and she got permission from him to let me listen. She was eager to play some of her recital pieces for him and to straighten out certain passages that had been bothering her. Her mother was coming from Puyallup to hear her recital, and then, too, there is always a special anxiety about performing for one's peers and for faculty members, as Rob-

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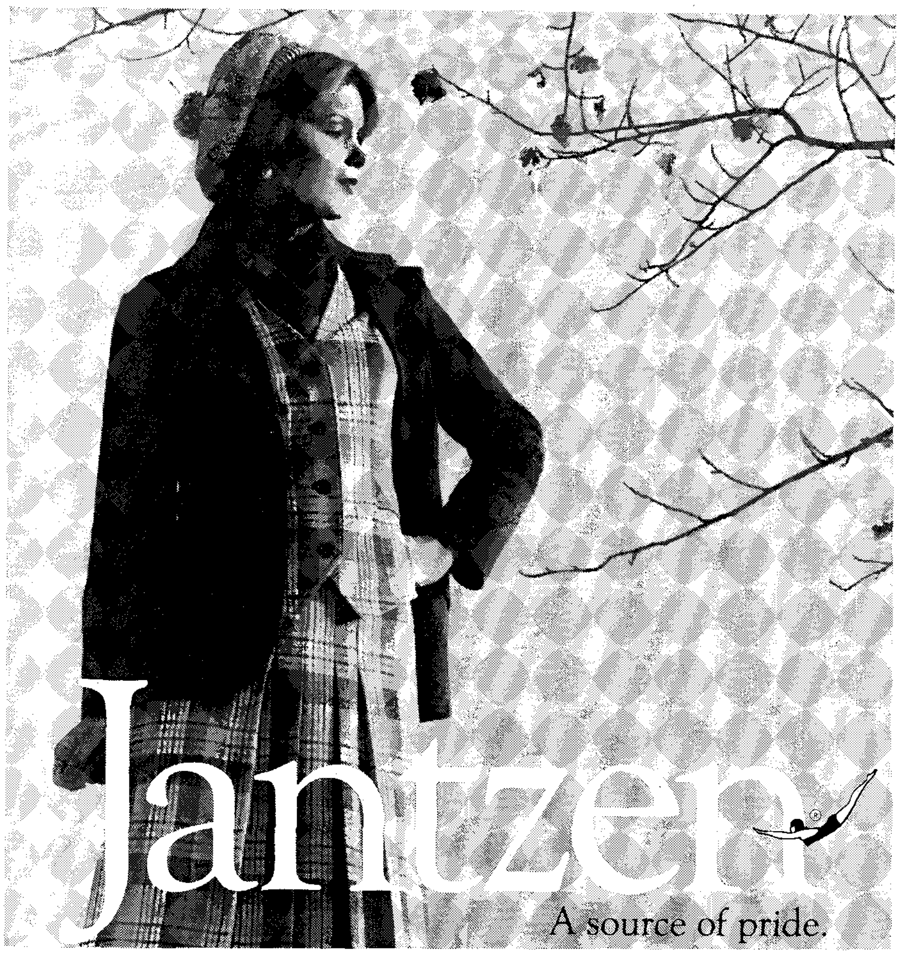

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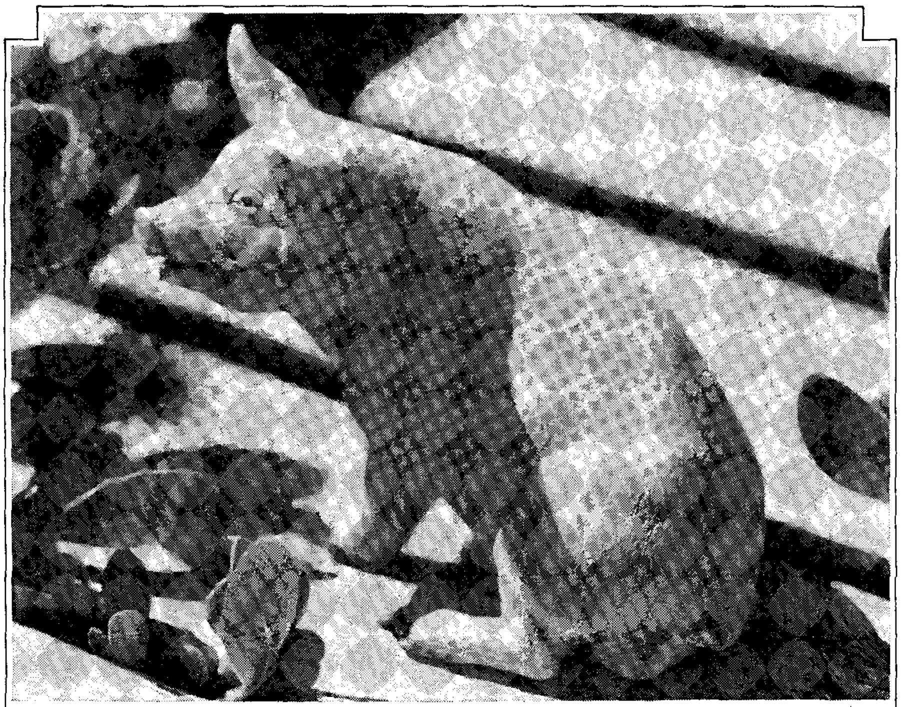
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in would be doing in Paul Hall that Friday night.

Alan Weiss, a slight, intense young man with short curly hair and wire-rimmed glasses, had just finished his lesson when we walked in. After Robin and Firkusny exchanged greetings, Alan and Robin discussed their schedules with Firkusny and agreed on when they would take their lessons the next day. In addition to preparing recitals, both were involved in end-of-semester exams. Firkusny said to Alan, "You need only an hour tomorrow. Everything is fine except the opening number—always the problem child." While Alan was packing up his music, he told Firkusny he had read a review in *High Fidelity* of Firkusny's recording of the Beethoven "Emperor" Concerto, with Uri Segal conducting the New Philharmonia. The critic Harris Goldsmith had liked the recording so much that he said he hoped Firkusny and Segal would record the four other Beethoven concertos. Firkusny smiled wryly. It was news to him that the record had been released. As a matter of fact, he hadn't even heard the final tape. He seemed amused at a situation that might have prompted another artist to call his lawyer. Alan said before he left that he would bring Firkusny a copy of the review the next day.

Firkusny is a tall, lithe, trim man with gray hair, blue eyes, and smile lines in his face which soften an almost austere handsomeness. He was wearing a black turtleneck, gray slacks, and a gray jacket, and his manner was relaxed and friendly. His studio, on the fifth floor, has two Steinway grands side by side, a long, low gold couch against the wall behind the pianos, a gold rug, two green armchairs, and a large window with a view of Juilliard's interior marble courtyard and, on this day, a clear blue spring sky: a pocket of serenity at one of the busiest intersections in the city.

Robin seemed at ease, though there was a certain urgency in her manner. She had so little time—two days. "I'd like to start with the Chopin, if it's all right with you," she said. "I'm beginning to think of it as my nemesis."

Firkusny sat down on the couch and told her to begin.

Robin played all four movements without interruption, and almost before the last note had faded she spoke. "Am I taking the opening too fast? For some reason, I'm always scared of it."

"It's a difficult piece," Firkusny said.

"If I have trouble with it on this piano, heaven help me," Robin

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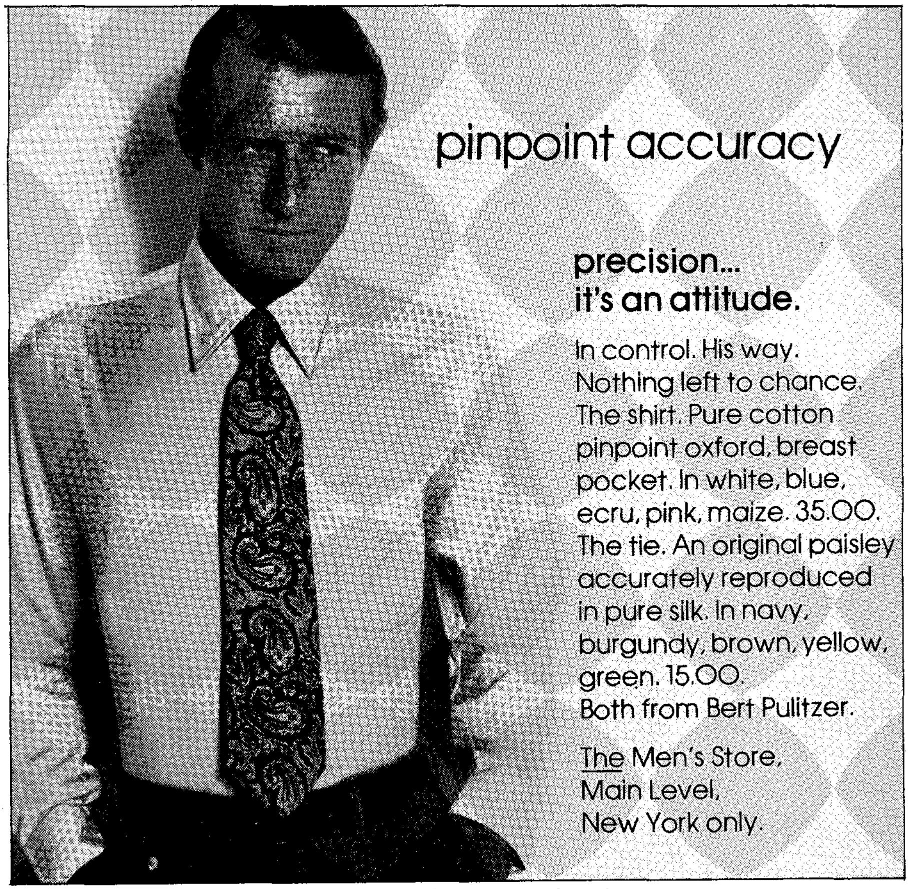

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said. She then played the Ravel "Miroirs" straight through—"Noctuelles," "Oiseaux Tristes," "Une Barque sur l'Océan," "Alborada del Gracioso," and "La Vallée des Cloches."

When she had finished, Firkusny walked over to the other piano, sat down, and, referring to "Oiseaux Tristes," said, "Perhaps more concentration in the right hand." He played a high repeated figure—silken and articulated.

Robin said "How do you get that balance?" and then "Oh, it's the fingering. I was using five-four-three-two-one. You're using five-four-three-two-three."

"Don't change it now," Firkusny said. "But for the future . . . Do it slowly for me."

"Maybe I *can* change it now," Robin said. Firkusny moved over to her piano and, standing, played the figure on the lower part of the keyboard. Then they played it in unison several times, Robin in the upper register, trying the new fingering. "That *is* better," she said.

"But don't do it so—terribly *important*," Firkusny said. "You know?" He moved to the couch and hummed the theme as Robin played it again.

She played "Une Barque" and stopped at one point and tried a tremolo that melted from a double forte into a decrescendo. "I just can't lose enough sound," she said. "Should I release the pedal? Perhaps I'm not voicing this enough." As if to reassure him, she added, "Don't worry. I'm a fast worker. I still have time to change. Maybe I should bring the top out more. If I stop the trill earlier . . . Maybe if I stay piano longer . . ."

"It sounds fine," Firkusny said. "Don't worry so."

Nevertheless, Robin played "Une Barque" again, looking for a break or a division in a certain section. They agreed that there should be none. Firkusny said, "It should sound as one wash of color." He added, "Not because you should do it but because it interests me, why not try starting low and then gradually work into a crescendo—a big crescendo?"

Almost to herself, in exasperation, Robin said, "Why do I keep breaking the line?" Then she played "Une Barque" through to the end.

Firkusny said, "This is charming."

Robin began the Schumann-Liszt lieder transcription, "Widmung," and for the first time Firkusny stopped her. He said, "Think of the voice. Always of the voice. He is singing to the girl he loves."

Robin laughed helplessly, and said,

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"*No* one could have sung it the way I did it. I was playing 'Mephisto.' How could I have missed the whole *character?*" She played it again, and he stood over her and softly hummed the melody, which was intertwined in a filigree of notes.

When she finished, he said, "The notes should be light, even though marked forte. A free sound—just the feeling of quiet ascending and descending chords."

She started again and played to the end, and he said, "Bravo! That's it. Very, very good."

Robin played "Hark, Hark, the Lark," a Schubert-Liszt transcription in which Liszt used repeated arpeggios containing the famous Schubert song. Firkusny told her not to emphasize the last note of the arpeggios so much, and then went to the other piano and played the arpeggio notes as chords, to demonstrate the effect he wanted.

"If I work, I can get it," Robin said. "Again, I missed the character." Then she quoted something that Mme. Dorfmann, who had been one of the C.A.G. judges, had said to her: "Don't try so *hard* the Chopin—let it come of itself as music that is in you." Robin added, "I still don't let it breathe in the right places. And I just can't seem to start the last movement without an accent."

Firkusny told her, "Why don't you start right in tempo? And the last movement is still a little tame."

"I know—it should cause chills," Robin said. "I'd like to keep it pianissimo, but then I lose tempo. I can't keep it going at the same presto speed."

"Basically, it's very good," he said. "I don't want to change it. I'm happy with the way you do it. It's yours, and it's convincing."

Robin told him that she had made a tape of Moussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" at radio station WNYC and that it would be broadcast the following Saturday morning, and that the studio piano had been shockingly bad. Firkusny said he was sorry that he wouldn't be able to hear it; he was going away. Robin said, "Well, I'm not sorry. I was so strung out from the competition I don't think I've ever played worse."

She returned to the Ravel and went over some of the problem spots. Of the "Noctuelles" she said, "I'm afraid I'm trying too many little things. It doesn't flow."

Firkusny said, "No, no. It is very good."

She picked up the score from the piano bench, flipped through the music,

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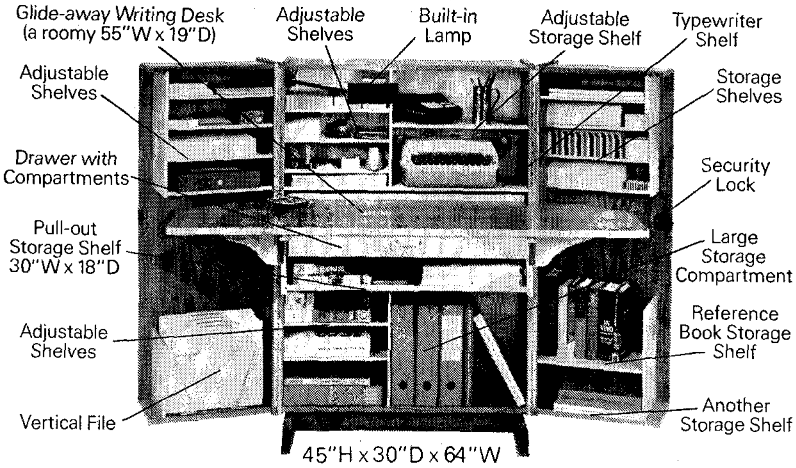

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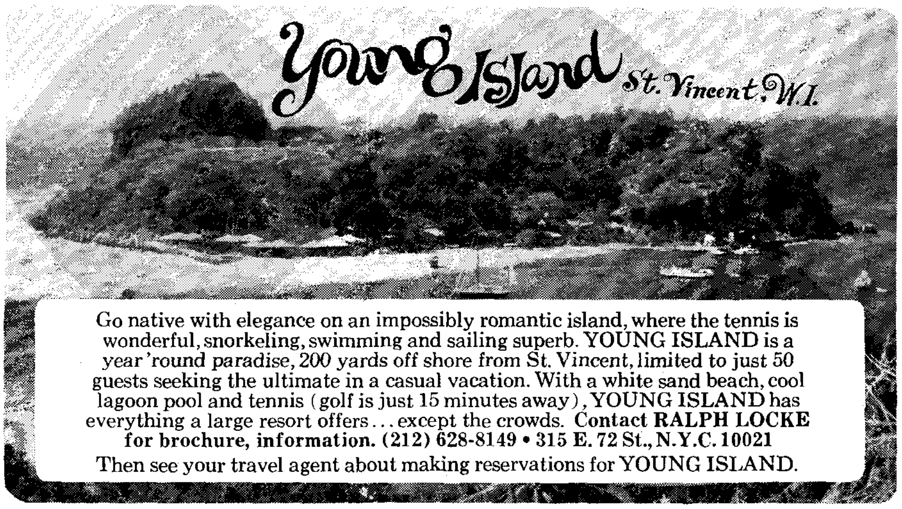

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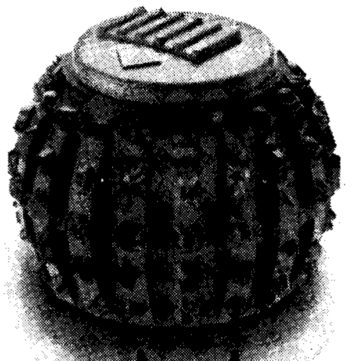

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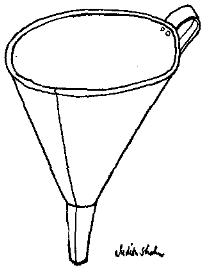
and pointed to a place on the page. "That's the spot. There are still some doubts."

She played it again, and he said, "That was beautiful, very beautiful."

Firkusny told Robin that after her lesson the next afternoon he would help her pick the piano she would use the night of her recital. (I pictured a sea of Steinways to choose from in Juilliard's basement, but later learned that the choice was between No. 1 and No. 3. No. 2, in the words of Josef Raieff, a concert pianist who teaches at the school, "died some time ago.") Robin said, "It won't take me long to choose. All I have to do is play *this*"—and she did fast repeated notes from "Alborada del Gracioso." Firkusny said that it was a little slow, and she laughed and said that it seemed fast to her.



She returned to the first movement of the Chopin. He stopped her and said, "If you rush the Grave, it loses in presence."

"I know, I know," she said, impatient with herself. She started again and played the complete movement. "Finally, I think I've got so I won't lose my head right on the first page."

"It's lovely—very, very lovely," Firkusny said.

Robin said, teasing, "You don't like my ending the program with the slow movement of the Ravel."

He said, "Yes, yes. It is all right."

She did the "Noctuelles" again, and he said, "Too fast—it's a bit rushed—and I don't hear enough right hand." He hummed the melody, inflecting a certain beat, which gave the theme the desired punctuation. It made sense to the ear.

Robin said, "That helps," and she played it again.

Firkusny smiled broadly and said, "That was nice. That's good. That's very, very good."

Robin asked, "Is the accelerando O.K.?"

He said, "It's fine. Let's go to the second one now."

She played "Oiseaux Tristes," and he said, "It sounds good, but start tranquillo."

She played "Une Barque" and said, "When I try for more volume, I lose the trill."

"Don't count the notes," Firkusny said. "Just play a tremolo." He came over and stood at the piano and played, to demonstrate. "Softer, and then nothing."

Robin said, "I think it's getting better—but then I heard the Lipatti recording."

She played "Alborada del Gracioso," and when she had finished he said, "The accents could be better. Not louder but sharper—a more intense quality but not more volume." She repeated a passage—one note struck repeatedly, rapidly, twelve times—and he said, "It's good. It could be better. Here you are still a little bit nervous. You are rushing it, and therefore you can't play all twelve notes clearly. It should be like one note. What is important is the first note and the last. It is like a guitar—it is blocked, you know." She played the entire piece again, and now he said, "Bravo! Bravo!"

She said, "Is the recitative O.K.? It seems to get slower. And I think I try to play too pianissimo."

"It should be." He sat at the other piano and played the passage, exaggerating the rhythm. They both laughed. "It must be rough, offensive," he said of a passage Robin felt was not loud enough. "But to force is ruinous."

Robin said, "I start with the fourth finger. Maybe I should change that."

He said, "It's color you need." He flipped through the score, pointing to different passages and saying, "Excellent . . . Good . . . Perfect . . ." Of one passage, he said, "You must keep it *mercilessly* in rhythm." She played the passage while he stood and beat time on the piano.

They discussed possible English titles for the Ravel pieces and agreed that in some cases there were no accurate translations. One, Firkusny said, might suggest moths or fireflies, but only in marshes, and one the morning song of a medieval jester. He asked what the English term was for a small fishing boat. Robin said she thought it was "small cruiser," and he laughed and said, "Not on the program, I hope."

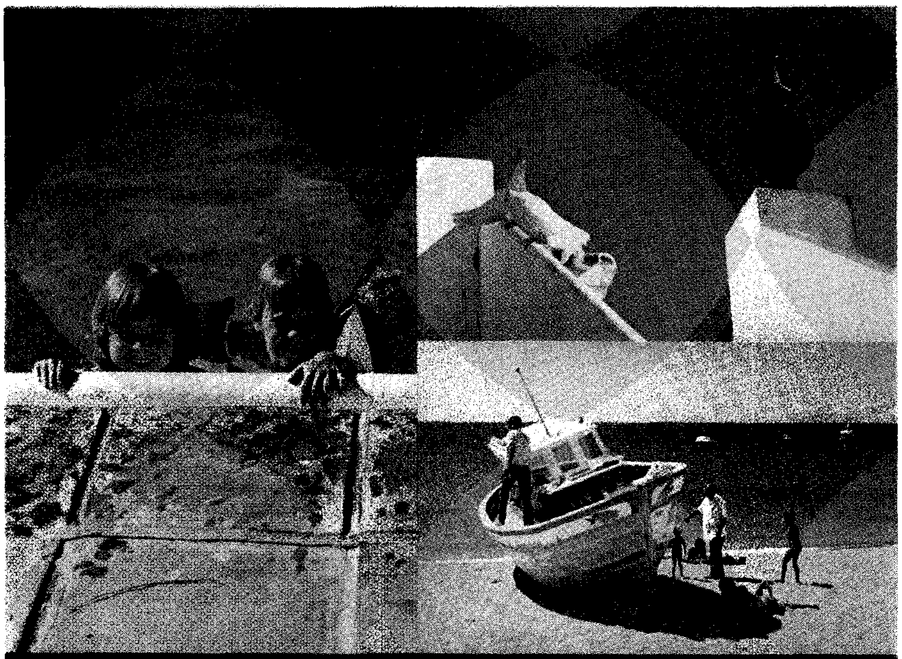
It had been a long lesson, and it was time to go. Robin gathered her music together and told Firkusny she would play her encores for him the following day.

ON the night of Robin's recital, Paul Hall was almost full by eight o'clock. Robin's mother, who had arrived in town the night before, was in the audience, as was Richard Campbell, a friend of Robin's from Seattle, who had brought with him on the plane a twenty-two-pound salmon for a post-recital reception in Jane Harris's apartment. Firkusny, his wife, and Mme. Dorfmann were in the audience, and several other faculty members were there—a good sign. I spotted Robin peering through a small window at the left of the stage which provided a view of the auditorium, and shortly after eight, when everyone was seated and the lights had been dimmed, she came onstage. She was wearing a floor-length lime-green chiffon dress with long, full sleeves and a full skirt, which moved gracefully as she walked to the piano. She acknowledged the applause with a smile and a nod, and, seated at the piano, remained motionless for a few seconds, hands in lap, eyes downcast. (Robin had told me once that she no longer suffered from acute stage-fright—and that she was happy because, with rare exceptions, she could channel the inevitable adrenalin flow into her music. She hastened to add that of course she was nervous—only a child or an idiot wouldn't be—but that the feeling now was one of delicious dread, a mixture of horror and anticipation.)

Her playing that night had a special excitement. There were no problems in the Chopin, and the last movement, which she took at an exhilarating speed, did indeed cause chills, as she had said it should. The Ravel had an ethereal beauty, and at times, because of the delicacy of her playing—the subtle, whispering pianissimos—the piano ceased to sound like a percussion instrument. When it was all over, she came out repeatedly to acknowledge the applause. Richard Fields climbed the steps to the stage, presented her with several bouquets of flowers, and kissed her on the cheek. Robin plucked a flower from one of the bouquets, handed it to him, and returned the kiss. Then she placed the flowers on the floor in front of the piano, sat down, and played the Liszt "Gnomenreigen" Étude. She looked radiant during the final bows—particularly beautiful and relaxed now that it was over, and apparently pleased with how it had gone.

Robin, as is the custom, waited in the Green Room to accept compliments and talk with the people who came backstage, and by the time she arrived at the reception, Jane's living room was filled with friends, relatives, teachers, and fellow-students. Everyone applauded, and there were shouts of "Bravo!" She stood on the balcony and smiled and waved and said, "Thank you, thank you. You can pick up your checks on the way out."

A bar had been set up in the dining room, and a long antique refectory ta-



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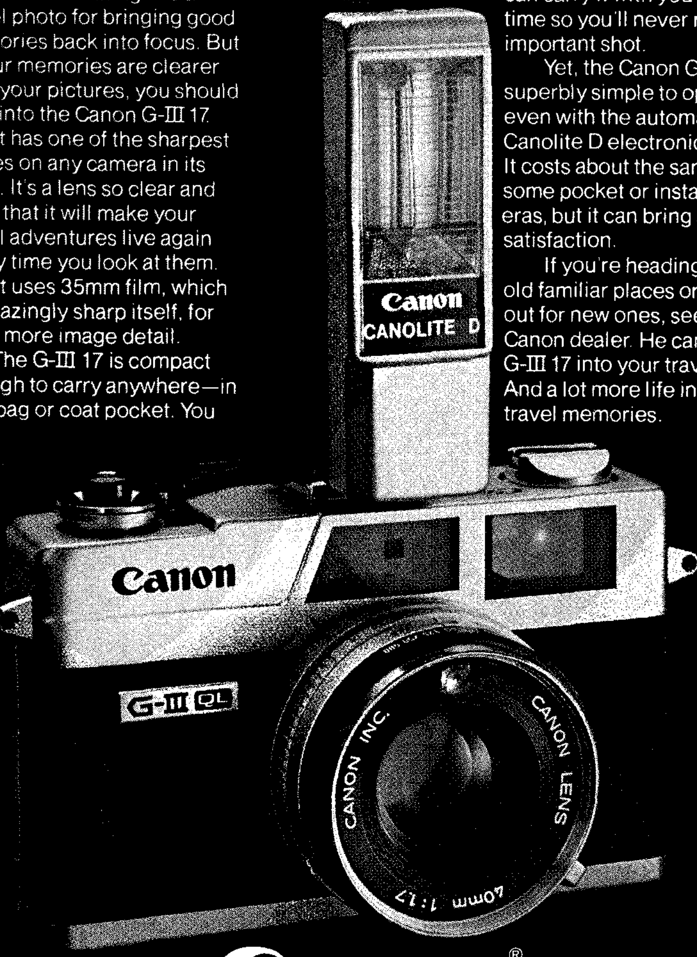

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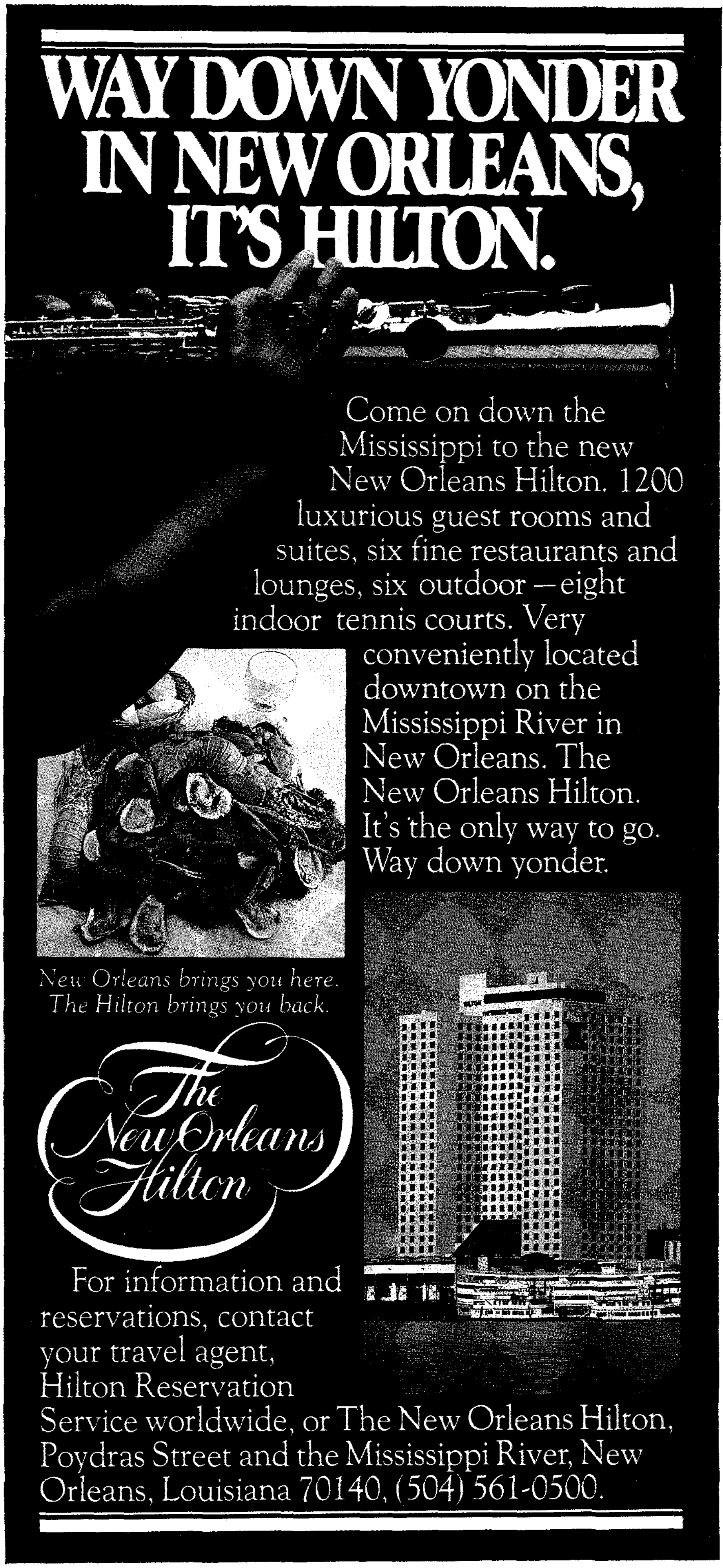
ble held—in addition to the salmon, which had been poached in Jane's kitchen that afternoon—an assortment of hot and cold dishes, all provided by Robin's friends for the occasion. Roman Markowicz and Richard Fields talked to Robin about the program and commented on things that they thought she had done especially well. Robin said the piano was terrible—almost a P.S.O., or piano-shaped object—and suggested that the three of them sneak into Juilliard some night and attack it with an axe.

Josef Raieff was standing nearby, and I asked him why Juilliard couldn't provide a better piano for its recital hall. He said, "Those pianos are subject to extraordinary wear and tear, and we do our best to keep them in tune and in good repair, but it's a losing battle."

Robin's mother, in a sisterly, almost identical green dress, accepted congratulations from the guests Jane introduced to her. Mrs. McCabe is a youthful-looking woman, and a stranger could have identified her as Robin's mother, the resemblance is so marked. She came with me into a den off the dining room to tell me something about Robin's early life.

I asked how Robin had become interested in piano, and Mrs. McCabe said, "Mac, my husband, and I both love classical music. Puyallup is so close to Seattle that over the years we've heard some wonderful concerts. We both play the piano—not well, but we enjoy it. Robin liked to pick out tunes when she was not much more than a toddler. By the time she was four, we had taught her the names of the keys, and we soon discovered she had perfect pitch. One night, Mac was playing the piano before dinner, and Robin was in the kitchen with me. He hit a wrong note, and Robin called out, '*B-flat.*' She always noticed music she heard on the radio or on records, and she'd hum the tune or play it. We realized she had this marvellous thing—a special talent—and we took her to Kay Logan, the best local teacher we could find. She was an excellent teacher, and Robin studied with her for ten years. Robin learned fast—too fast, actually. Her playing was not always accurate, and in the beginning we had to weed out the McCabe notes from the Mozart. When she was almost five, I took her to a women's-club luncheon, and she played a little piece for the ladies. I think it was something called 'Spooky Hollow.' I remember she was wearing a cute little red dress and black patent-leather Mary Janes, and she looked very serious while she played. When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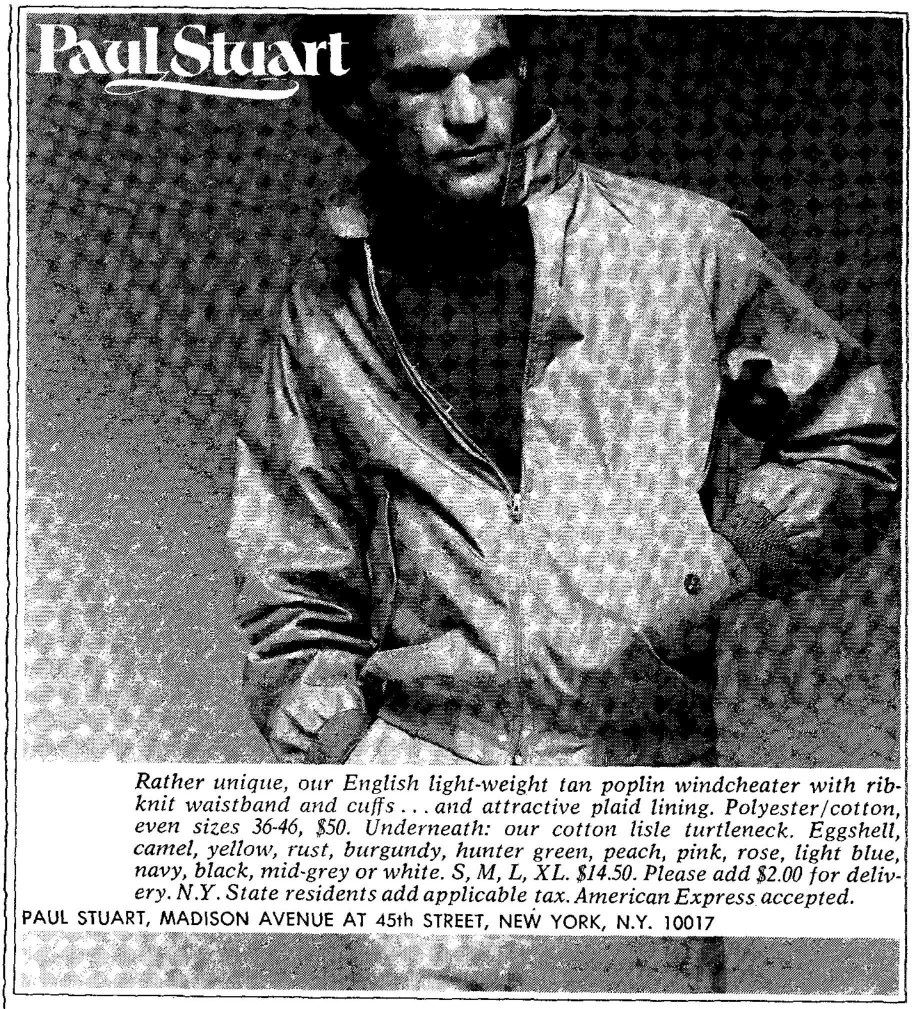
she'd finished, she ran to me and buried her face in my lap." She paused and smiled at the memory. "During the drive home, she asked me, 'When can I be on the menu?' "

Many parents have trouble getting their children to practice; often, lessons are provided not to produce a prodigy but to enrich the child's life, but sometimes the more it means to the parents, it seems, the more the child resists. Part of the explanation is undoubtedly that the child is asked to learn the tiresome techniques of playing long before he can anticipate the beauty of music. Mrs. McCabe said, "Getting Robin to practice was never a problem. I think it can be a lonely thing to do, even boring, in the early stages. The scales and exercises aren't much fun, though they are *so* important. I think the fact that I sat with her while she worked probably helped. She always had a special fondness for music—she loved it from the beginning. There's also a bit of the ham in Robin. She liked to play for people, and that was a big help when she started giving recitals and entering competitions."

Robin's emotional equilibrium before a competition or a performance is unusual, and I asked Mrs. McCabe if her daughter had always been like that.

She said, "Robin has certainly had her share of butterflies. The times she did get nervous about playing, she would let it all out verbally—become vociferous, almost belligerent. Once, I was driving her to a competition—I think she was twelve or thirteen—and she was whining and complaining. She'd had a bad lesson, she didn't like one of the pieces she was going to play, I think she'd heard that another girl would be at the contest who would be hard to beat. It's so long ago . . . Anyway, she complained so much that I stopped the car and said, 'Tell me what you want to do. If all this is just subterfuge to shake me up so I feel as bad as you do, then we'll go on. But if you really feel that bad, let's go home.' I think she realized then that she shouldn't be thinking just of herself, and after that she was more considerate, more mature."

Young musicians who are pushed hard in the beginning and have few outlets in other activities often have emotional problems later in life. Mrs. McCabe said that Robin had always had other interests. In her early teens, she would rather watch a ballgame than hear someone else perform; in fact, she played the glockenspiel in the high-school band, so she could see all



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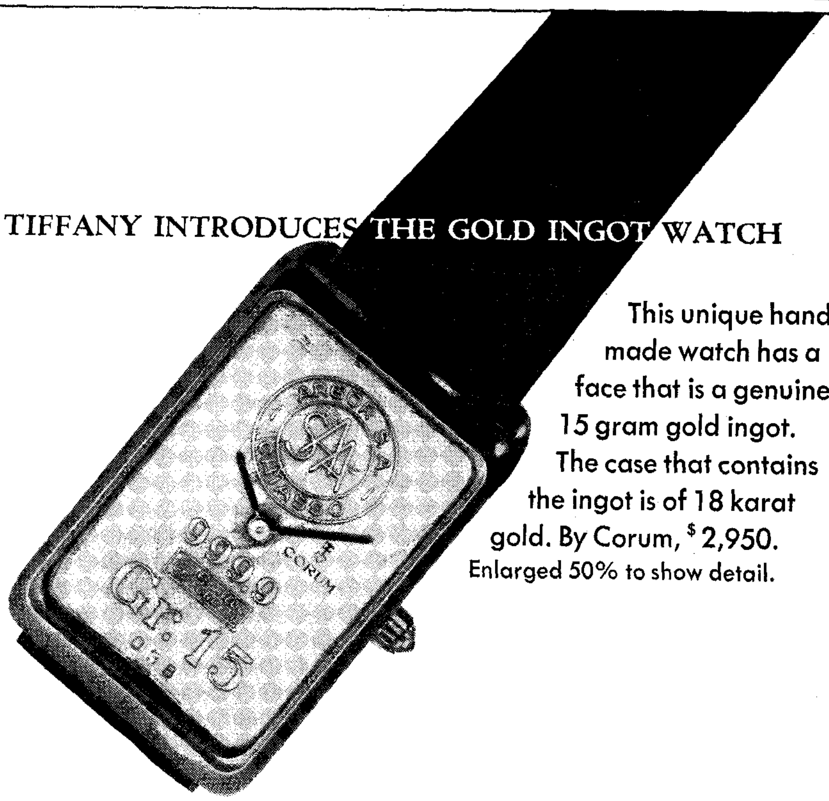

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the games. "She loves to ski, and is very good at it, and she is an exceptionally fine tennis player," Mrs. McCabe said. "She was asked to be on the high-school team, but the muscles involved in playing tennis can strain those used playing the piano. She was disappointed that she had to refuse, but we tried to make it up to her—with more skiing, and trips to Sun Valley, and a cottage we have on a lake in Idaho. Also, we have a swimming pool, and Robin's friends often came over to swim. She gets very involved in everything she does—applies to it the same intensity and concentration she applies to music."

Mrs. McCabe told me that someone had asked her recently what she thought her most important contribution to Robin's musical development was, and she had said, "Picking up the pieces after a disappointment—a second instead of a first in a competition." She said that it was never hard for Robin to accept losing if she felt she hadn't played well but that when she knew she had, and didn't win, she felt crushed. "Logically, when you're in many competitions in the same area, the blessings have to be passed around," Mrs. McCabe said. "It's not possible to win every contest. We had clichés for such times: 'It's the law of averages,' 'You've got to learn to accept losing,' 'It's part of life,' 'The best people are not necessarily the ones who win all the time.' "

Mrs. McCabe said that Robin's two sisters were both taking piano lessons. Rachelle, who was eighteen, was very serious about it, but Renée, who was twelve, said she would rather be a stewardess. "I tell Renée she can't quit—she has to keep going, or she won't have anything to talk about with her sisters."

Robin called to her mother from the doorway to come and meet the Firkusnys and Mme. Dorfmann, and we both returned to the dining room. The crowd had thinned out somewhat, the din of voices diminished. Mitchell Andrews was standing in the archway between the dining room and the living room, and I went over to talk with him. He has had a successful, varied career as a soloist, a chamber-music player, and an accompanist. Andrews told me now that he thought her recital had gone well. He said, "I like her playing very much. She seems so calm and collected, with no stiffness or posing—almost regal, extremely well under control. That, to me, is one of the exciting things about her. We don't see any emotion to speak of and everything sounds so beautiful, and all of a sudden

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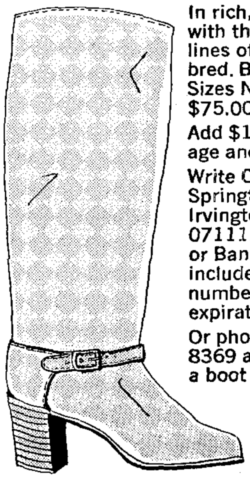

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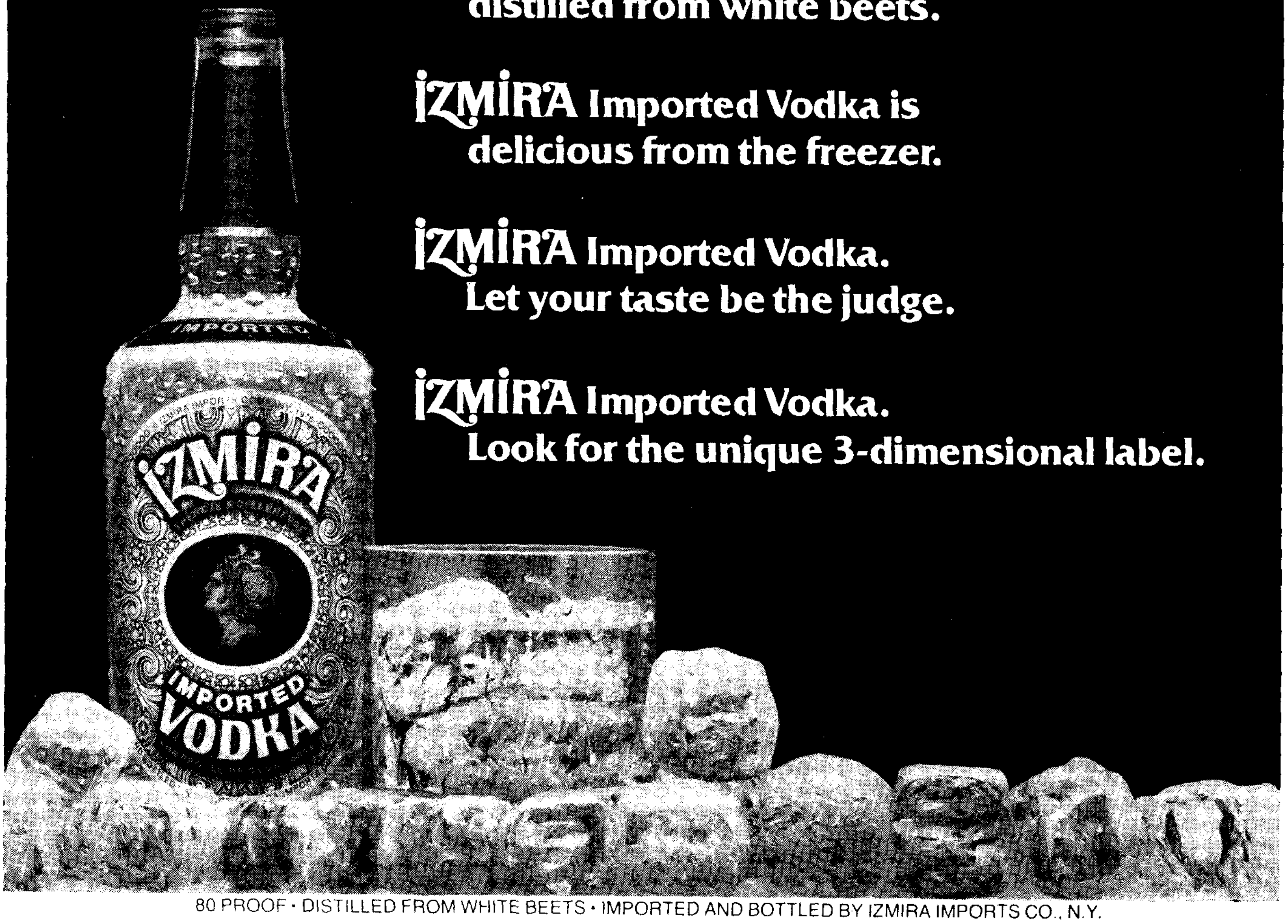

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she lashes out in a big climax and then she moves somewhat. It all seems to arise from some inner core of excitement that was there the whole time, and you realize it's not an inconsistency in her playing when these big moments come. I like playing that doesn't go in for a lot of movement at the piano. The less body English you use, the better you play the instrument. Also, she's very positive in her approach: she starts when she's ready, and not before."

Robin had moved to Jane's Steinway, at the far end of the living room, kicked off her silver sandals, and begun to play. A piano is a magnet to her, and now that most of the guests had left, and nothing remained of the salmon but the skeleton, she was enjoying playing another kind of music—Cole Porter. Richard Fields, Richard Campbell, Richard Fredrickson, a bass player with whom Robin had taped a recital for educational television, and Roman gathered round. Robin switched from Porter to a game she likes to play. She began a Beethoven sonata and after the first phrase suddenly segued into a Bartók in the same key, and in this manner she switched from one composer to another—Liszt, Falla, Mozart, Prokofieff, Scriabin—until everyone was laughing. A guessing game followed, with the young musicians taking turns trying to outwit one another. The idea was to play the first chord of a piano composition and see if the others could name it. Roman was especially quick, and was not baffled even when Robin played a single note; he said, "The 'Appassionata.' " Then Richard Fields held both hands in chord position in midair and Roman named the correct Liszt piece. Richard Fredrickson played a chord that baffled all the others, and when he said it was the "Trout" Quintet they called him a cheat—chamber music was not supposed to be included. When I left, at one in the morning, Roman and Richard Fields were playing Mozart duets.

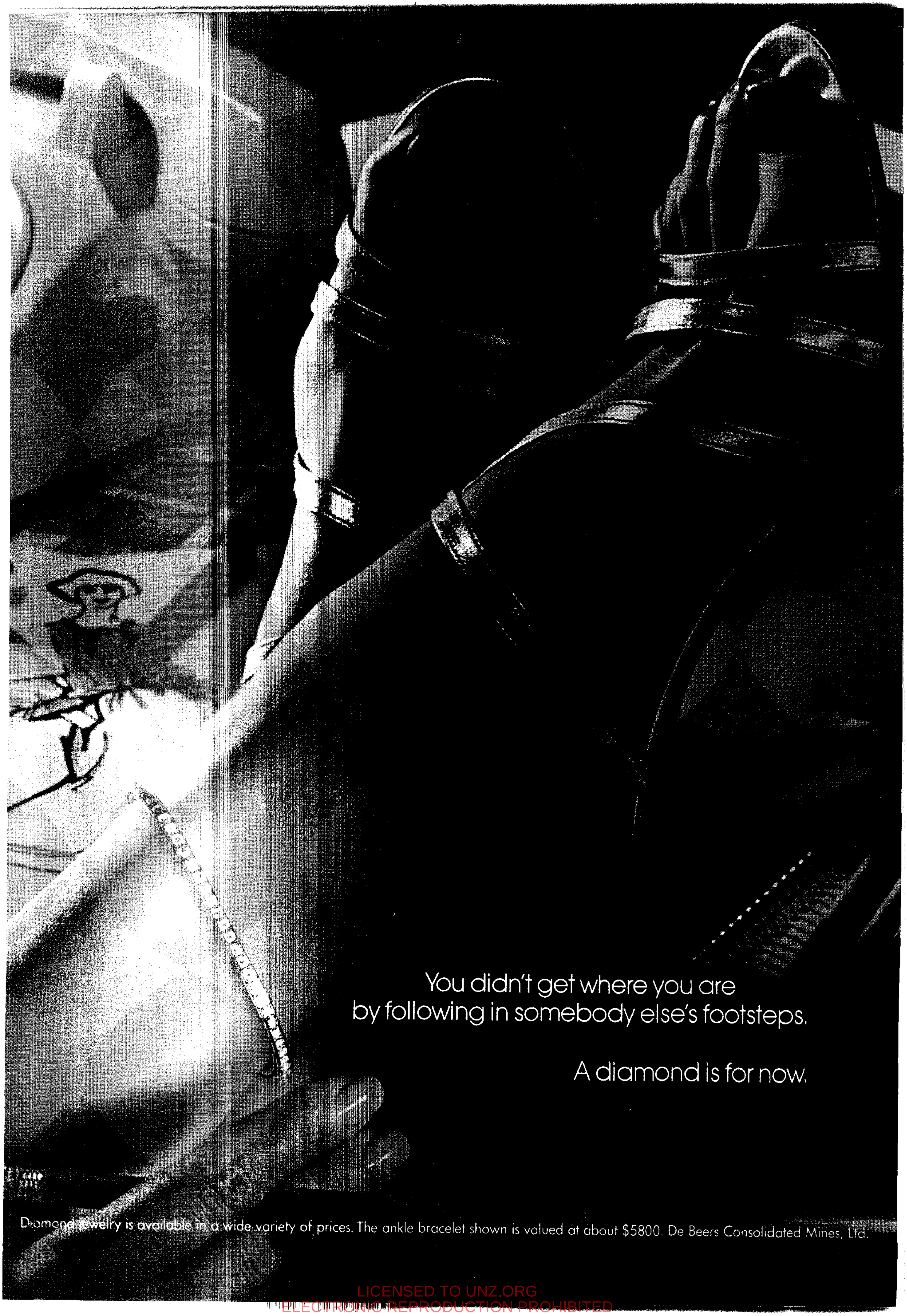
ON May 25th, Robin had her first postrecital lesson with Firkusny. Before they got down to serious work, she said she wanted to do something special for him. She played "Satin Doll," and told him it was in honor of Duke Ellington, who had died the day before.

WHEN Robin comes onstage to play, she often sits a minute, hands in lap, profile to the audience. The result is that the audience seems to be invited into the music just as she is tuning the audience out. I commented on this to Robin. It was the week following her recital, and we were having lunch in the Juilliard cafeteria.

"There are some pieces—bravura pieces—that you can plunge right into, and that can be very effective," she said. "Others require self-containment, a feeling within yourself that I think of as a vibration. You have to allow this to come out. More and more, I've become aware of something that's exhilarating and at the same time disconcerting—that in performance sometimes the greatest things happen almost in spite of you. It's a little frightening and a little maddening. But it's still exhilarating, because it signifies total freedom. All the mechanics are there, the rudiments. You're basically drilled, the muscle memory is there, and something inside you says, 'All right, let's see what happens. Let this happen.' I had that experience in the 'Funeral March' movement a couple of times the other night. I knew that it was going well, and a voice inside me said, 'Try this.' When that happens, you're above the practice-room experience. It's a wonderful feeling. I think it was Stravinsky who said, 'Your freedom comes from your discipline.' "

Before the recital, Robin had seemed particularly concerned about the Chopin and the Beethoven, and I asked if they were both new to her.

"Only the Chopin, though the Beethoven is still slightly green," she said. "The Beethoven bothered me because it was the first piece on the program and is a difficult one to start out with. The first movement is extremely treacherous. Most pianists let the tempo run away. I knew the things I wanted to happen, and they couldn't if I let my nerves get the better of me. The Chopin was new, and it's an unusual piece. It doesn't suit the piano, fit the hand, the way most Chopin works do. It's new, and in some sections the freedom isn't there. And again, I was afraid of nerves. I was still thinking of what was the right thing to do instead of what was the thing that wanted to come out of me. I remember what Satie said about his own compositions—how he worked. He said, 'I always like to walk around a piece several times, accompanied by myself.' And Charles Ives said that you should never play a piece the same way twice. He compared it to viewing a piece of sculpture from different angles. It all takes time. Next year, I'll play the Beethoven differently. In twenty years, the Chopin won't be the same. I have a tremendous re-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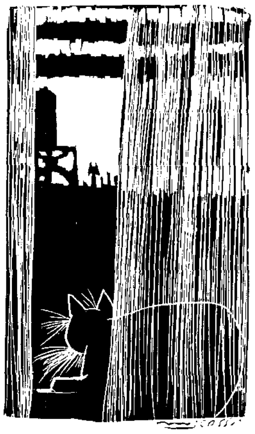
spect for the Chopin. You take your life in your hands when you play it. It's so well known—it's included in so many recitals. There has to be individuality. You can't copy anybody. It has to come from the heart, and that takes time. Some pianists try to emulate the so-called Chopin style—which seems meaningless to me. We don't know how he played. We know what he was like as a person. It's the same thing when we try to resolve the controversy about playing Bach. His music was written for the harpsichord, the clavichord, or the organ. Should we, then, try to produce a small sound, an intimate sound? Should we try to terrace our dynamics the way they did on the harpsichord? It seems to me these things can only be worked out by individual judgment."

That week, Robin had gone to Town Hall for the New York début recital of another Juilliard pupil—a young man from Sweden named Marian Migdal. Donal Henahan had covered it for the *Times*, and though he conceded that Migdal had technique—almost too much; he called him "finger-proud"—the pianist otherwise left him cold. Robin said she agreed with the review. "He lacked nuance, color. The Chopin was much too fast. I'd heard him before, and I don't think he was at his best that night. He's a beautiful pianist. I'm sure Mme. Dorfmann is furious with the review, because he's her star pupil. I played the Chopin for him before the contest, and he gave me some valuable help. He's recorded it in Europe. But the night of his début he played it matter-of-factly. And Henahan's phrase 'finger-proud'—I've never heard it before. It's a perceptive statement. You have to be careful. You have all this machinery, and if you let it go with nothing behind it—no emotional channelling—the audience gets the feeling 'So what?' Fortunately, one review won't wipe him out of the ballgame. Unfortunately, there's not much he can extract from it." Migdal was apparently not damaged by the review; he is playing in Europe, and his career is flourishing.



Henahan's review led Robin to talk about other kinds of criticism. In the past, she told me, she had encountered one teacher who had a reputation for being cruel to his pupils. "There are so many ways of criticizing without devastating a person," she said. "I was in one of his master classes, and he told one young boy, very sarcastically, 'We count the flies on the ceiling while you play.' It was funny, and we all laughed, but it was cruel. Perhaps one needs a strong ego to take any kind of criticism in this field. Perhaps the teacher was trying to tell the kid that he doesn't have what it takes for a career. If so, he should have told him directly. I think this is especially true for a boy. A girl—well, it's a cliché that she doesn't have to have a career. But a boy—if he's committing himself totally to this and he doesn't have the stamina and endurance and consistency, not to mention the talent, he should be *told* before he has wasted half his life and set himself up for crushing disappointment."

Migdal's début had drawn a small audience, Robin said, and Town Hall had looked depressingly empty. She said that one reason she had entered the Concert Artists Guild competition was that she wanted to make her début in Carnegie Recital Hall—the smallest auditorium in New York that is covered by *Times* critics. She reasoned that she could possibly fill the hall and thus insure more excitement. Most débuts attract very few people aside from relatives and friends. She had considered entering the Naumburg, but if she had won that, her début would have been in Alice Tully Hall. Besides, the repertoire requirements included a big American piece. She played the Copland Sonata, but she didn't consider it a good piece for her—she said she tends to fall in love with pieces she really likes and really works on. "I don't play it well yet," she said of the Copland, and she went on, "If I'm still in this game in a year or two, I'll try for the Leventritt. That's an enormous competition." She said that no one had advised her to enter the Concert Artists Guild competition—Firkusny had been on tour when she made the decision—and she added, "I really didn't expect to win, I really had no hopes. I'm a born pessimist when it comes to things like that. I suppose it's a safety valve to keep me from being too disappointed. I tell myself, 'Always expect the worst, and you'll never be disappointed.' I guess deep down I don't believe it. I have a theory that in the music business moderato will get you no place."

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ficulties of being interrupted erratically by the judges, Robin said, "Playing in such circumstances doesn't leave you with a very good feeling. You try not to anticipate the interruption. If you think about it, you're not creating very much. You can't play to a jury—you've got to immerse yourself in the music. My teacher Béla Siki has judged the Leeds Competition, in England, several times. That's a beautiful competition—a huge competition. Wonderful prizes. You get a guaranteed broadcast with the BBC and lots of concerts. Siki says that when you're on a jury, listening all day, you know in a few minutes whether you need to listen further. No matter what the contestant is playing, it's got to be something that comes across right away. I asked him, 'What if it starts really badly?' and he said, 'Well, you try not to close your ears. Give it a little more chance.' If you're not doing well, in the back of your mind you know it. But you try not to think of that. You try to redeem yourself somewhere, somehow. I played in a competition in Washington and made a bad stumble in the cadenza of the Beethoven Third Concerto. It sounded really bad. But I told myself, 'Now you've got to do something good.' And it got better. I thought afterward that I'd done some gross things for a few seconds, and that maybe I was finished, but I won. It takes discipline, and you learn it or else. The conductor Michael Tilson Thomas has an apt saying: 'Applaud thyself not. C sharp and B natural.' Another thing he says is 'Talent plus chutzpah equals bravo.' And I think it's true. If you lack the drive and the nerve to push yourself even when you have misgivings over what you're about to attempt, not many people are going to push you. The world's too busy and moving too fast. But you must not take whatever happens—especially adversity—personally. You develop a thicker skin as you go along. I know that my playing right now doesn't reach certain people, that there are things they disapprove of. But you have to decide for yourself that there's some good there anyway."

After a brief pause, Robin went on, "It's getting harder, though. I'm convinced that fifty years ago a pianist could get by with pyrotechnics, histrionics, and lots of flair. But audiences are better educated now. Recordings have done it. In a way, it's sad. We go out with an image of Richter playing the 'Appassionata' and it's hard not to think, My God, why even try? You have to forget that. I think that the

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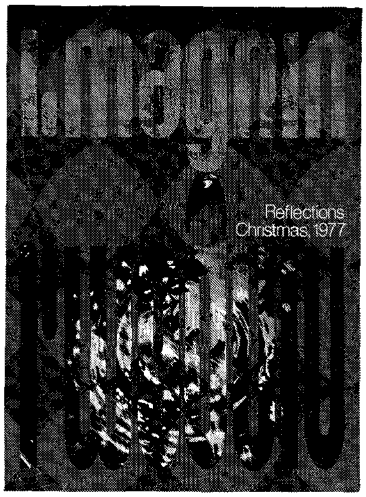

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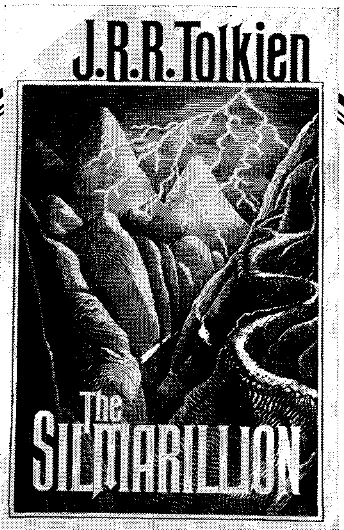

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On September 15th, the book Tolkien worked on for 50 years and was revising at the time of his death will be published.

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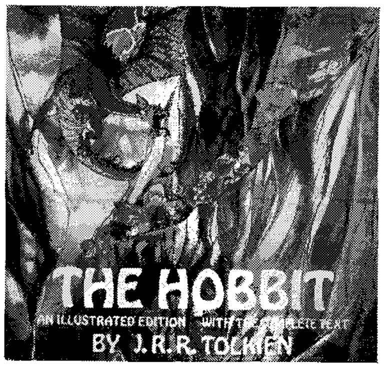
When JRR Tolkien died, he left behind millions of devoted fans. He also left behind a final work, The Silmarillion, which has now been edited by his son, Christopher, and will be published by Houghton Mifflin ($10.95).

The Silmarillion is the work on which Lord of the Rings and all the Hobbit adventures are based. It is the account of the chaotic First Age, and it tells of epic struggles and betrayals which were to haunt later Ages, such as the theft of the Silmaril jewels and the war to get them back.

It also contains several shorter works, including "Of the Rings of Power," the connecting link to Lord of the Rings. The Silmarillion is both the cornerstone of Tolkien lore and the completion of the mythology which has captured our age. Finally, the chance to read new Tolkien!



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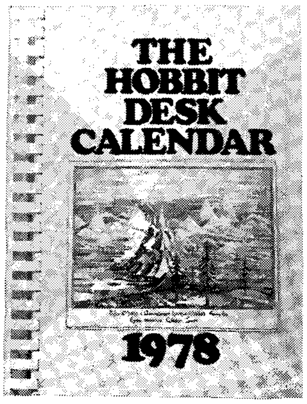

For collectors, there will be leather-bound editions of Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit. And for those who want to introduce Tolkien to a friend, deluxe boxed paperback sets of Lord of the Rings. Plus editions of his children's books and songs.

And since the world of JRR Tolkien wouldn't be complete without some of the books his works have inspired, you'll also find Humphrey Carpenter's fine new study, JRR Tolkien, a biography. And The Tolkien Companion by JEA Tyler (Avon $4.95), an exhaustive thesaurus of Tolkien names, terms and places, arranged and explained in alphabetical order. Great for heavy Tolkien addicts.

We could go on. But by now you've probably gathered it's going to be a heck of a party. In fact, you might say that since Lord of the Rings, the best thing to happen to Tolkien fans is now at Waldenbooks.

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moment you walk out onstage, and not before—in that moment you have to decide that there's something special about the way you play the piece, that is different from anyone else's. There's something unique, and you deserve this moment to be heard. But if you *think*, Oh, compared to So-and-So this sounds terrible, you might as well forget it."

I asked Robin who some of her heroes were, and she said, "When I was very young, Cliburn. I'd read and heard so much about him. I still think he's great, though it's become chic to put him down. He received so much publicity as the blond Apollo who broke through the Iron Curtain. Now he's getting flogged by the press because he hasn't expanded his repertoire—he tends to play the same program. He takes it in stride and with good humor. He told me, 'I talked to Ashkenazy, and he teased me about playing the same piece all the time. So I said to him, "Vladie, I will play the perfect program. I'll start with the Sonata in F Minor—Beethoven. Next piece—Sonata Opus 57—Beethoven. Intermission. Sonata 'Appassionata'—Beethoven." ' He plays that piece *all* the time, but it's not totally his fault—he does so many concerts a year and when he appears with an orchestra, people don't want to hear the Ravel Concerto. They want to hear the Rachmaninoff, the Tchaikovsky." She paused. "Well, maybe he should slow down." She went on to say that everyone found him likable. "He has terrific family loyalty. He can talk Wall Street, books, politics. He loves life. The fact that he's outgoing has been a big asset. And he is a *great* talent—there's no doubt about it. He has a very special, luscious tone. He's become highly popular with audiences but scorned by critics. He's now the blue-collar pianist. It seems unfair to put him down." After a minute, she added, "It's no longer easy to list the top greats in the piano world. There are so many."

I wondered if the crowded field made her feel threatened, and she said, "Actually, it's almost comforting. There's a certain salvation in being in a sea of anonymity. Also, in spite of the tremendous numbers, everybody has his favorites. This is the age of individuality—you can do different things and be appreciated for them. I couldn't begin to name my favorites. I go through periods when I'm a Horowitz freak. Rubinstein seems to transcend the whole performance idea of the moment onstage. He's lived such a marvellous life that we all have to look at it and learn from him. Any man who can give

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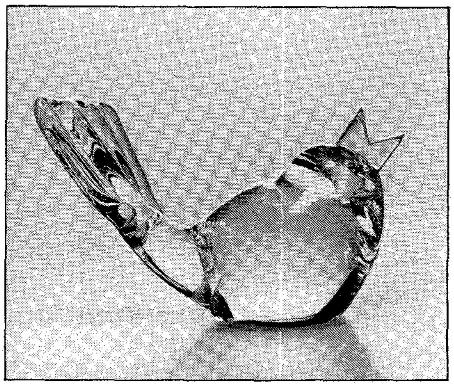

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Robin quoted a cliché in the music world—"There's nothing as dead as yesterday's performance"—and commented, "I prefer not to believe it. It *might* be true if you compare a performance with a painting—the performance is no longer 'in the air.' But there is gratification for the listener as well as the performer in remembering how certain things went.

"Stanislavski equated life in the theatre with running the gantlet. That is true of music, too. It can be a terrible business trying to exert your own personality and be a creative artist. He said a very important thing of young people: 'You have to like the art in you, not yourself in the art.' That says so much. I know so many people who are in love with the *idea* of themselves as artists or musicians, and it gives them an identity, an illusion, and if they discover they really can't deliver they often go off the deep end. But if you can see yourself as having something that is worth developing, that deserves reverence and regard, and it is an art you know, then it sees you through the bad times. In a way, it's like looking at yourself as an enzyme, more than anything else. You're an enzyme, and you hope the catalysts are right, so you come out with something really good. The interpreter's role is a tremendously responsible one. You're given a great work of art—a Beethoven sonata, say—and what do you do with it? First of all, you try to be faithful to the score, try to give allegiance to it. But there has to be something of you in the performance, in your rendition or reading of it, that is unique and reflects your insights. Part of it is possibly self-containment. You

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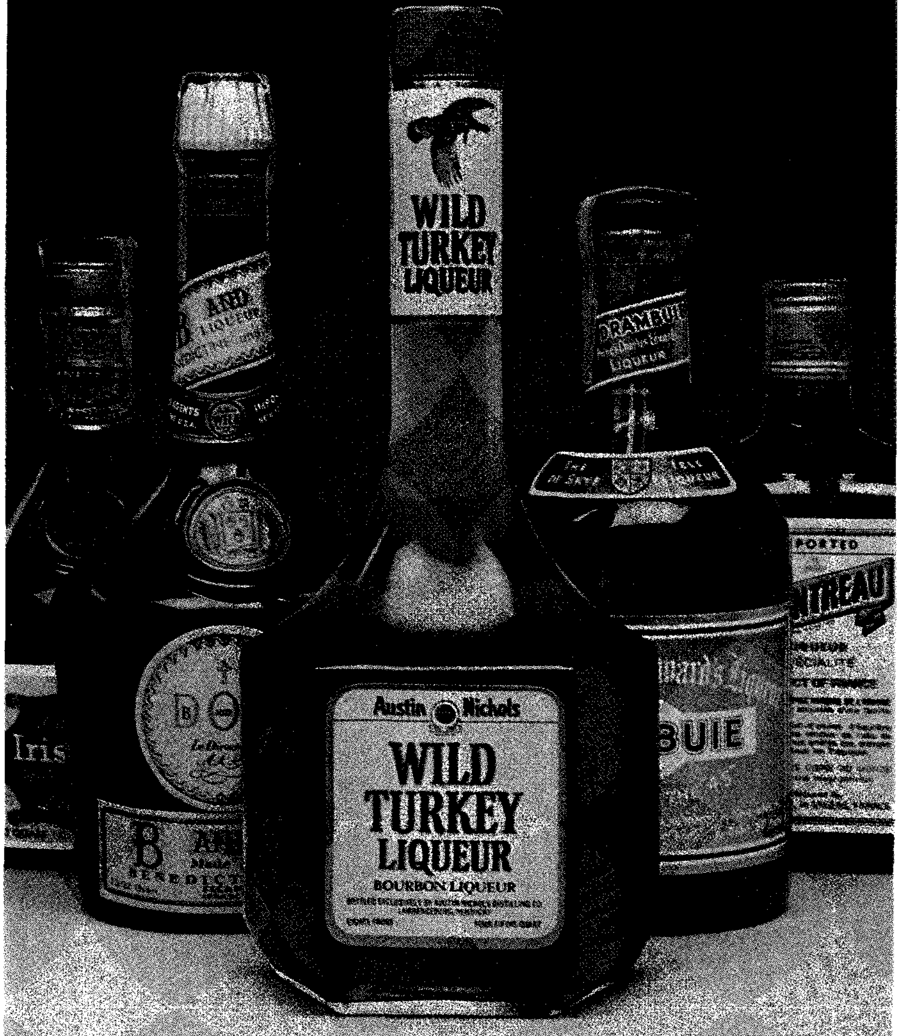

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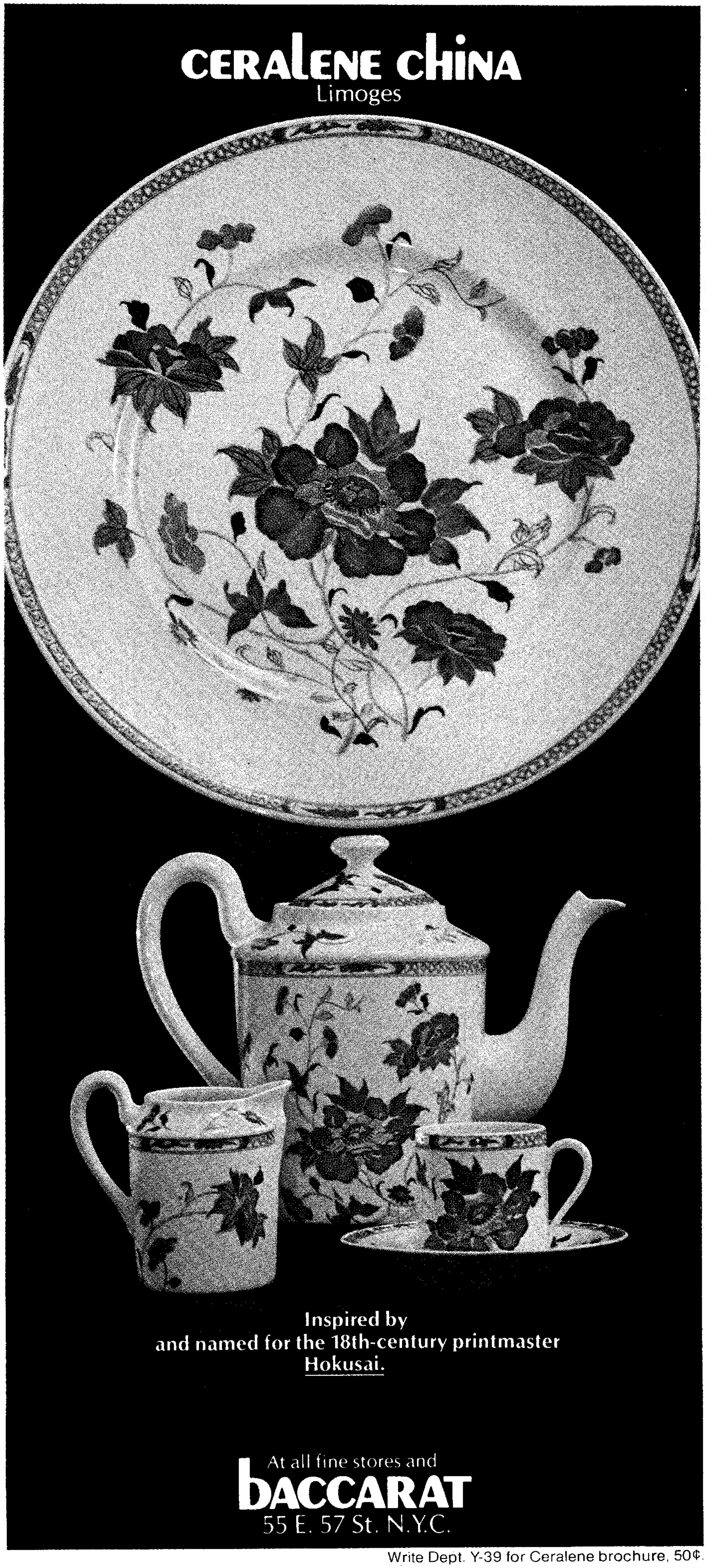
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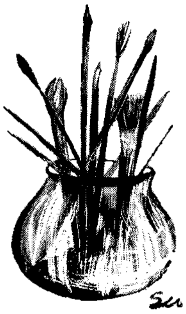
have to like yourself. You can't function well if you're basically insecure about what's inside you. And if music is only a medium for asserting your ego, then you're in trouble. The life of a musician is a rarefied one. If you know there's something inside you, and you're respectful of it, and you know that your job is to develop it and have others help you develop it, then you're going to do something. You might develop something that's different. Maybe not better than what anyone else has done, but something worth working on. Such thoughts help me and sustain me."

Robin said that she usually enjoys practicing, but added, "Some days, I look at that keyboard and it looks like a giant leering mouth with hundreds of sharp teeth. I swear, I can't even see a piano. I see this box with all these teeth, glaring at me. And I think, I don't want to go *near* you today. Sometimes it's a mood of the day, or it arises from something that happened to me beforehand—some disillusionment. It might not even be related to music. Or it can happen after a bad lesson. I usually force myself to practice then. If that's too painful, I write in a notebook. If I've had a really rotten lesson, I don't want to think about it. But I force myself to do that, too. I'll write a sentence the teacher said, an adjective he used, and I'll underline it, and sometimes poke holes in the page because I'm so mad at myself."

A bad lesson, Robin said, was one in which she had been shortsighted—had failed in a proper interpretation of a piece—or had played something she had worked on a great deal and felt proud of, and discovered "how *green* it still is." She said, "There are certain times when I've studied a piece and either I haven't taken the time or I've gone about it in a careless way, and it shows. My teacher can just zero in on one phrase, and it's immediately obvious that what I've done is so immature it makes me feel like an absolute schlepp."

She turned to the subject of her taste in music, saying, "Sometimes I have a certain feeling about a piece—an inner conviction that I will play it well. Other times, I have what amounts to a hunch about a piece—that I'd really rather not play it at this point in my life. At the moment, I don't feel much affinity with contemporary composers, though I like their music when it's played well. At one stage, I didn't even like playing Bach, which seems unbelievable now. I'm beginning to love some of the small Beethoven pieces, and the Schubert-Liszt transcriptions I did in my recital. Three years ago, I didn't know they existed. Like many young pianists, I came to Juilliard armed with big, bravura pieces, but I've relaxed somewhat, and no longer feel the urge to be histrionic. I find myself thinking in more intimate terms. I'm paying more attention to vocal literature—learning to listen to arias, songs. It helps with what is essentially a percussion instrument to become more aware of melodic lines. When I spoke of 'voicing' in my lesson, I meant bringing out an inner voice that needs some emphasis to be heard at all. Glenn Gould—whom I consider rather an eccentric pianist—is famous for bringing out inner voices. Chopin is thought of primarily as a melodic composer, but that seems inaccurate to me. There's beautiful counterpoint in his compositions that isn't brought out very often in performance. In some pieces, he uses the piano like a toy—flashing scales, arpeggios. The sonata I did in my recital is not as pianistic as most of his works. That eerie last movement . . . It's been nicknamed 'The Wind over the Grave.' Starting it is like jumping off a cliff. There's no looking back. There's a temptation to take a safe tempo, but it would be ruinous. I find myself thinking every time I start it, Please, God, let it come."



Robin laughed at herself, and said, "If you mistrust yourself when you're playing that fast, if the brain suddenly says, 'Here comes the spot where I might have trouble,' then you've had it. Béla Siki says, 'In the moment of performance, you have to *trust* yourself. You ask no questions.' When you're practicing, you question everything—every phrase. Ask how it should be constructed, where is it going, where is the top point. But in the moment of performance you can't think of any of these things. I've heard pianists have memory slips, and I could hear the slip coming. I can hear when something becomes tentative. You can almost tell when muscle memory is taking over. Perhaps the pianist is questioning something, or he's thinking of someone in the audience. And then the slip will happen. The concentration must be the most demanding of anything anyone does in this world: the things you have to remember, the things you must tune out of your mind—whispering ladies, cellophane wrappers, flapping programs, creaking piano stools."

Robin said that she had been working so hard recently that she had had little time left for fun, but she added, "I have some good friends—a couple of boyfriends who are very nice, very understanding. I'm somewhat of a loner at this point in my life. I haven't met anyone who's managed to interfere with this drive. I shouldn't say 'interfere,' because when it happens it will be very nice. But it will take a strong personality. I think I'm rather hard on the boys I go out with, because there is this conflict—I don't have the *time* to be involved. Sooner or later, they get the impression that they're playing second fiddle to a Steinway, and it must be hard to take. Also, in addition to practicing six or seven hours a day—twelve, if I'm really working—I have a great need for privacy. I need time to answer mail, do bookwork. Some nights, I pray there won't be any telephone messages for me, because I'll have to answer them."

Robin has the reputation at Juilliard of being a hard worker; in 1973, Juilliard awarded her the Albert Szirmai Scholarship and in 1974 the Ruth D. Rosenman Scholarship—both for outstanding achievement in piano. She felt that she had inched her way up to the middle-gun level, and the other students seemed nicer. "Probably because I've become friendlier," she said. "Also, I try not to interfere in any practice-room intrigues—and there are a million of them going on. There's quite a bit of gossip, back-stabbing. It can take up your whole life if you let it. Some kids seem to like to kvetch at great length. What's the use?" Robin seldom eats in the Juilliard cafeteria, because the temptation to linger over coffee and talk is too great. The gossip at Juilliard is usually about who is having an affair with whom, or which marriage has just broken up—often because one career is doing better than another.

I had an idea that the lesson I had heard with Firkusny was not typical of the way he taught, since it was just before her recital, and teachers tend to be reluctant to try many changes at such a late date, but Robin said that in a way it had been, though his letting her play the Chopin and the Ravel without interruption was—with the recital so close—unusual and valuable. "He likes to polish fine points. He takes it for granted that when I bring a piece to him it will be at an advanced stage—that I will have

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worked on it a long time myself. He got down to brass tacks in that lesson—especially in the Ravel."

Mention of Robin's recital reminded her of one that she had given in Puyallup the previous summer. "There was an American flag onstage, with a spotlight trained on it, and I started with 'The Star-Spangled Banner'—a huge arrangement, à la Cliburn," she told me. "I *did* it for several psychological reasons. I wanted to put the audience at ease. About a thousand people had bought tickets, many of whom probably hadn't been to a recital before. They came because my father was their doctor—small-town people who might be put off by Bach, Debussy, Falla, Beethoven. I also did it to please myself. I guess I'm old-fashioned, but it made me feel good. It was quite dramatic. Those who knew me probably thought, She's been in New York for two years, and she hasn't changed a bit. For encores, I did my own arrangement of Gershwin's 'The Man I Love,' and then Streisand's 'Happy Days Are Here Again.' It's a great piece—that arrangement. Very slow, lots of pathos. The chords are *so* good. I copied it from the record shamelessly. It brought down the house. It was really fun to do, though I would never do that kind of thing in New York. I didn't mean to play down to them. But it's very important to gauge your audience's tolerance level—decide what it's receptive to, what it can take, warm it up. I feel that performing is show business to a certain extent. You can't play only to musicians."

The cafeteria had emptied while we talked, and was about to close. Robin said she had a million things to do before she left town for the summer. She had found a small apartment in the West Seventies and wanted to get at least partly moved. Also, her sister Rachelle was giving a recital at the University of Washington the following weekend, and Robin didn't want to miss it. As we were leaving the building, we met Roman. He had given his recital the night before. With practically no advance notice, he had been given a hall to play in—the Juilliard Theatre—and even so he had had a good-sized audience, which included Robin. Roman said he was exhausted from the recital; the piano's action was so stiff he was worn out. (The Juilliard Theatre piano is one of the very few pianos in the school that aren't given a daily, steady workout.) Then Roman asked Robin if she had liked his Bach, and she said she had, very much, and congratulated him

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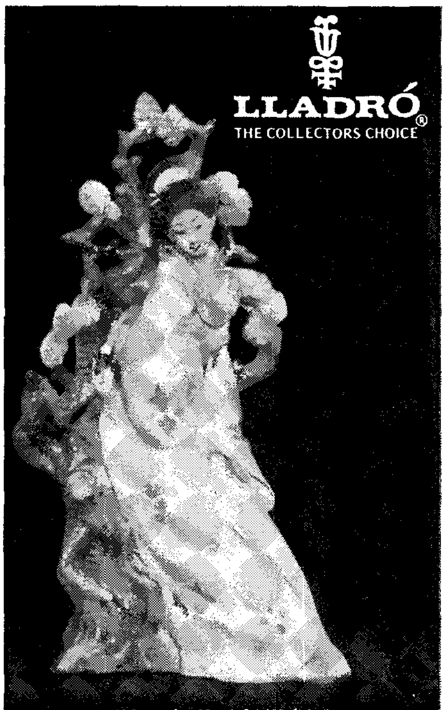

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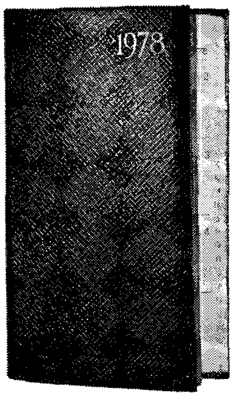

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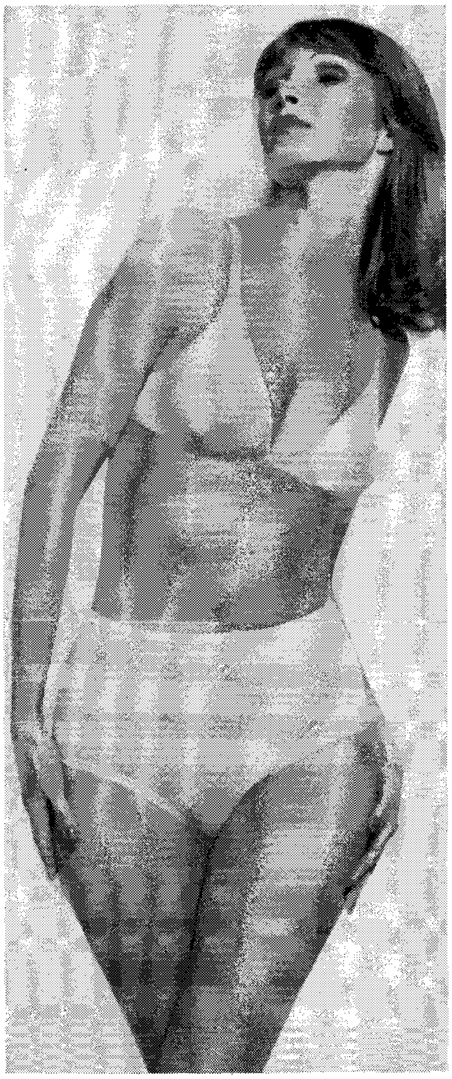

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on his large audience. Not many students could almost fill the theatre, she said. Roman said, "With a Polish family, that's one thing you can count on." He told Robin that Mme. Dorfmann had been so angry with him that she hadn't come backstage afterward to congratulate him. Robin, who already knew this, asked why, and Roman said, "I didn't play the way *she* wanted me to play. I played the way *I* wanted to. I am not a Coca-Cola—a crowd pleaser."

ROBIN spent the first part of the summer of 1974—after a week of tennis and swimming and no practicing—teaching at the University of Washington and taking lessons from Béla Siki. In August, she went as a student to the Shawnigan Summer School of the Arts, on Vancouver Island. The school's faculty consists of performing artists, who coach students and give chamber-music concerts three times a week. The session lasted four weeks, and at the end of it Robin was asked to return the following summer as a member of the faculty.

In the fall, Robin settled into her small apartment—"barely big enough for a skinny adult and one very small child"—and, having been granted a teaching fellowship at Juilliard, began teaching there. She did a number of programs in the New York area—some arranged by the Concert Artists Guild and some as a result of invitations from various schools and institutions that had heard about her—and, with her New York début looming April 1st, she practiced every minute she could. She spent Christmas with her family in Puyallup, and, back in New York, in February, she began studying with Mme. Dorfmann. In March, she did a run-through of her recital program at Jane's for some fellow-students, including Richard Fields and Roman. She wanted to see where the weak spots were—where she might still be a bit insecure. She had decided to do the Chopin and two pieces from "Miroirs." She would start with the Beethoven "Andante Favori," followed by the Chopin, and then the Scriabin Sonata No. 4 in F Sharp Major, Opus 30. After the intermission, she would play the Sonatine for left hand by Dinu Lipatti, "Une Barque" and "Alborada del Gracioso," and the "Mephisto Waltz" No. 1 of Liszt. After Robin had played through her program and listened to her friends' comments, she returned to the "Funeral March," but after the first, sombre eight bars she suddenly segued

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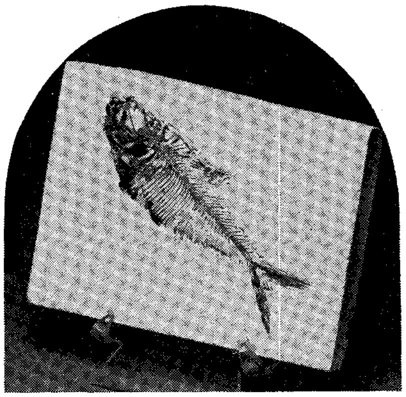

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into a lilting "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" in the major key. Everyone laughed—Roman dared her to do it at her recital—and the intense scene dissolved into a party.

Robin's mother and father both came to New York to hear her début, and so did Richard Campbell, who was now the music-and-art critic of the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*. On the night of the recital, he took Robin down to the Recital Hall. He said later that he had never seen her so apprehensive or nervous. She asked to be driven around the block three times before she finally went in. It was a very serious, solemn Robin who came onstage at eight-thirty. She was wearing a vibrant-pink dress, similar in cut to the full-sleeved green one (for freedom and comfort). She had filled the hall, as she had hoped she would, and everything went well. During the intermission, her mother tried, without success, to get backstage. She thought Robin looked very pale, and wanted her to put on more lipstick. There is a special vulnerability about someone making a New York début, and when Robin's was over she received thunderous applause and shouts of "Bravo!" from her friends, partly as a way of patting her on the back reassuringly.

At a reception in the apartment of Harry Kreindler, a friend who lives on Central Park West, Robin still seemed tense, and, with the exception of a beaming Dr. McCabe, the party seemed almost funereal. Though Robin was pleased with the way she had played, who knew what the *Times* critic would say? In the back of her mind was a bad review Alan Weiss had got three months earlier, when he made his début. The critic had complained that Alan had practiced too much—that there was no spontaneity in his playing, and that it was annoyingly perfect. Alan is considered one of the best pianists at Juilliard, and everyone from the school felt that he had played beautifully; no one could understand the harsh review. Robin didn't know who had covered her recital for the *Times*. (Sometimes, for a number of reasons—the tickets don't arrive at the *Times* or the performance is so bad that silence is charity—no review appears, and every performer fears, first, no review and, second, a bad one.) Some of her friends hoped that it had not been Donal Henahan, who, even when he likes a performer, can inject a barb or cast a doubt. ("If his recital yesterday afternoon at Alice Tully Hall was not merely one of those freakishly great days that good pianists sometimes enjoy,

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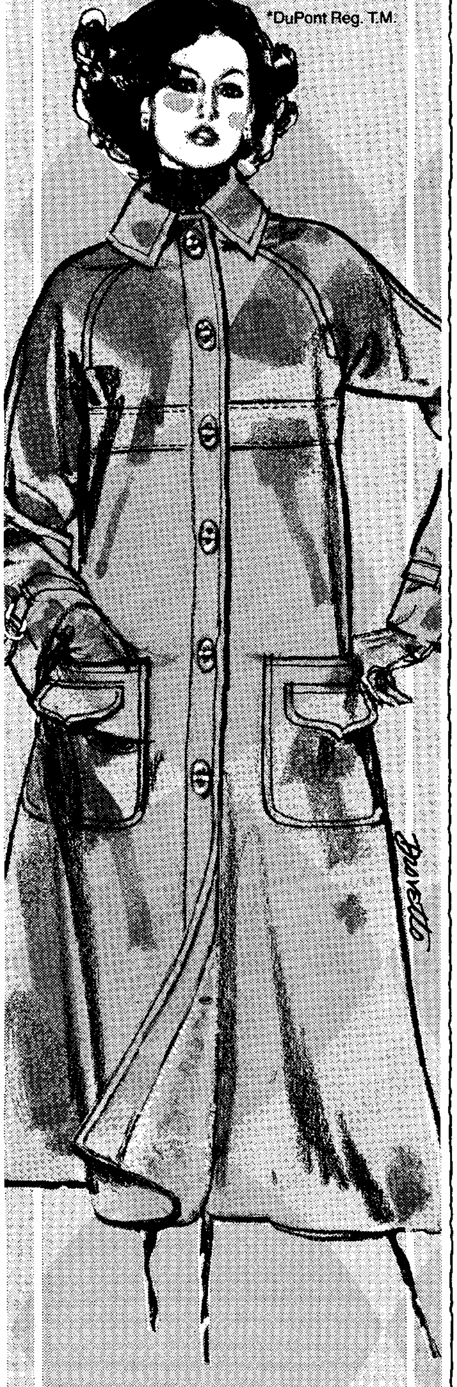

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Seymour Bernstein is ready to break out into a wider circle of attention.") Robin said that if she had appeared grim while she was playing, it was because the piano was so bad; she had had trouble adjusting to it, to make the most of what it had to offer. Bloch was at the reception, and I asked him why Robin—or any pianist, for that matter—didn't rent a good piano for such an important occasion. He said that the backstage area of the Recital Hall was too small to hold an extra nine-foot grand, and no one wanted to do a recital on a smaller piano.

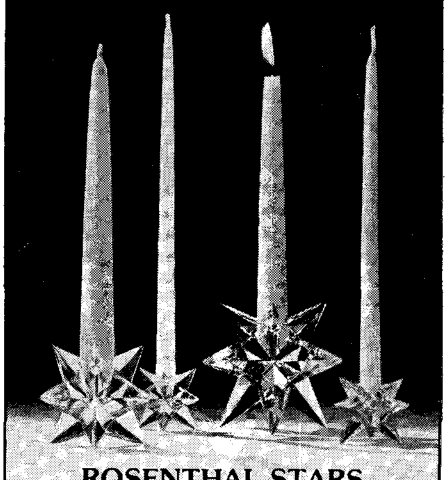
The *Times* has a policy of printing most reviews of weeknight débuts in the Sunday edition, and Robin had to wait five days to read hers. Raymond Ericson was the critic, and the review was good:

> Robin McCabe, who made her local début under the auspices of the Concert Artists Guild in Carnegie Recital Hall last Tuesday night, is a talented and independent-minded young pianist. A West Coast artist, she has recently been studying at the Juilliard School with Rudolf Firkusny and Ania Dorfmann.
>
> In Chopin's "Funeral March" Sonata, she asserted her musical personality with a number of interesting details, rubatos, stressing of inner voices, unusual dynamics. She had a marked ability to use varying tonal attacks provocatively, and this came to the fore in Scriabin's Sonata No. Four in F Sharp. She gave this a lightly febrile, almost skittish performance. It was less intense and emotionally possessed than normal, but it was no less effective because of its pointillist coloration.
>
> The snapping rhythms of Ravel's "Alborada del Gracioso" were equally striking in Miss McCabe's performance, and she gave a full-blooded version of Liszt's "Mephisto Waltz" No. 1.
>
> A novelty of sorts was Dinu Lipatti's Sonatine for the left hand alone. Written in 1947, it is an attractive piece, but like most of its kind, more interesting in its clever use of one hand than for the music itself. It was an excellent vehicle for the pianist, whose technically adroit left hand was put to good use in the more conventional works, too.

Still, one review was not enough to get a managing agent interested in her, and such interest—which was often aroused after a pianist won a major competition or two—would offer her about the only hope for a career.

Firkusny arranged a meeting between Robin and Andre Kostelanetz. If Kostelanetz liked her playing, perhaps he would use her in one of the New York Philharmonic Promenade Concerts he conducts in the spring. Several months later, Robin played for him at his apartment. He liked her playing—told her that she played

Rosenthal



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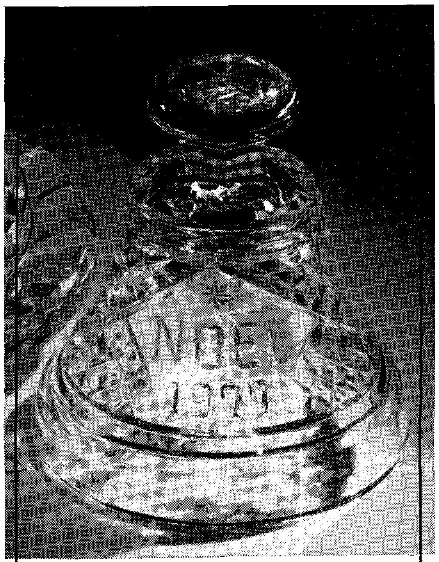

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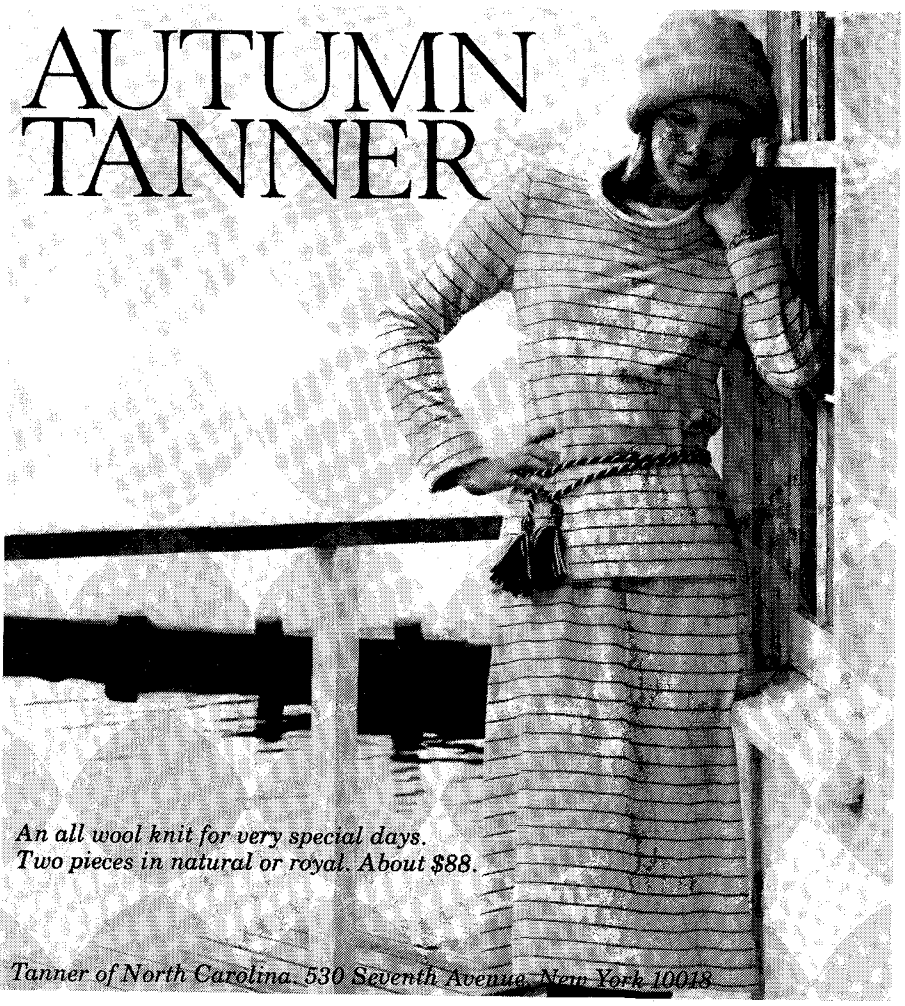
beautifully and could obviously play anything, and that he would keep her in mind. Robin said later that he had made no promises but had given her some advice. He told her, "You have to keep beating your head against the wall until you come to a soft spot, and then you must beat even harder."

ONE night in June, after Juilliard had closed for the day, I spoke with Robin again. She had been hard at work practicing for a three-week South American tour, and she was leaving the next morning. I asked how the tour had been arranged, and she said, "The State Department asked the Dean of Juilliard to recommend someone the school thought would be a good representative, and my name was one of the ones suggested. I was asked to send my dossier—my propaganda—to Washington, and they were apparently satisfied, because I was chosen."

I had been curious for some time about what motivates young artists—what keeps the Robins and the Alans and the others going—and I asked her now. "If you love music, performing is, of course, more gratifying than listening," Robin replied. "You can multiply almost to infinity the pleasure of listening in order to gauge the immense satisfaction of playing. Obviously, it is essential to have a performing temperament. You actually live for those moments of being onstage. I have a tremendous desire to perform, and that keeps me going. When you perform, you become the protagonist. And if you don't have the outlet of performing it can be terribly frustrating. I guess the truth is that I feel most attractive, most complete as a person when I'm playing for an audience."

In recent years, a number of pianists have chosen to specialize in certain composers—Lili Kraus in Mozart, Ruth Laredo in Scriabin and Rachmaninoff, William Masselos in modern works, Grant Johannesen in French composers—and I asked Robin which composers she liked at this point. "Of course, nobody can be all things to all styles of music," she said. "Right now, I definitely feel more comfortable in anything but the classic style. The baroque style, yes. The Romantic, the French impressionists, I feel especially good in. Though you can reach the saturation point with too much. Garrick Ohlsson worked for six months toward the 1970 Chopin competition in Warsaw. After he won, he said that he played nothing but Mozart for a month to launder his mind, and that



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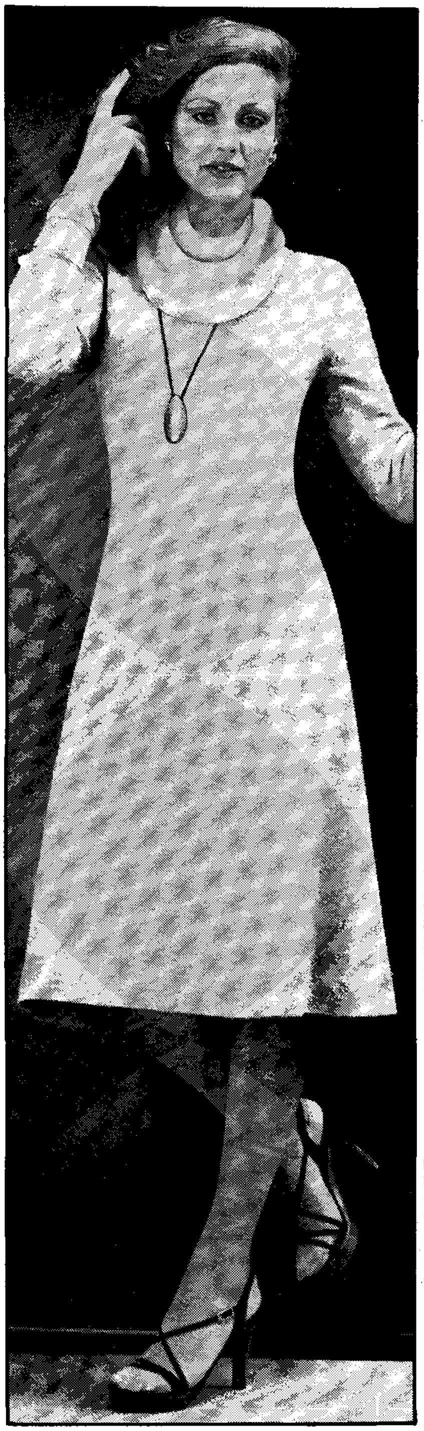

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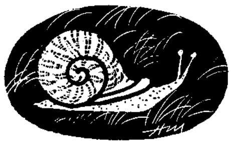
it felt refreshing and great. I feel the same way after I've played the Rachmaninoff concertos a number of times—I have a need to play some early Beethoven. There are *so* many young musicians—the competition is so stiff—that perfectionism is the order of the day. You simply can't program something you play in a half-baked way. You're smart to stick to the things you do especially well. You have to capitalize on your strengths. I don't want to shove the rest away, though. There's still time for me to develop. I'll cautiously start programming other composers. I like Haydn very much. I relate more strongly to his sonatas than to some of the Mozarts—a choice that would shock a lot of musicians. I like the Haydns better as pieces, and they're not performed often. They're almost overlooked. I feel the attraction, and that perhaps helps me play them better. And the chamber-music experiences I've had have been invaluable. You learn to listen on a one-to-one basis—quite different from playing with an orchestra. It's a vital benefit to any young musician."

In some ways, Robin's New York début recital seemed too rich—for a non-pianist's blood, at any rate. Robin agreed that this was probably so, and said that if she had it to do over again she would not play all those great big pieces. She laughed. "It was my twenty-one-gun salute," she said. "At least, I managed to omit the 'Appassionata.' I didn't want the critics to put me in the dust because I wasn't doing it the way they're used to hearing it. Actually, it's a good idea in a début to steer away from war-horses. I took a big risk playing the Chopin, because it's so overplayed. I was lucky with that piece, and, because of the good experience, I feel very secure with it now. If I'd gotten a bad review, I probably wouldn't have touched it again. Well, the New York début is the hardest thing for any musician to do. When you think of Alan and that bad review, and all the good things he's done since . . ."



Robin fell silent, but after a few moments she went on, "The more I think about this business, the more important personality seems to be. I don't mean charming an audience, though that counts. I mean getting along with people and getting the most out of your relationships with them. Especially the people you can learn from—the ability to be with them and have them functioning at their best. When I went to Mme. Kabos—the most tempestuous woman I have ever met—I was new to New York and felt I was treading water. I think if I'd had more ego strength I would have learned more from her. In many ways, Mme. Dorfmann is an enigma to me—I suspect we get along because my ego is stronger now. She tends to exaggerate when she criticizes, and if you keep that in mind it's fine. She has such an ear, and was a great performer. Now she's teaching instead of playing, and I have a lot of empathy with her. Of course, she can't help living vicariously through her pupils' playing, and the result is that she's very demanding and hard to please. But she has helped me a lot with sound. I think about sound, and sound production, in a different way because of her. She's such a tremendous person, and when she is at her best there is no one equal to her. But you have to catch her in the right mood."

ROBIN came back to New York from her South American tour toward the end of June, and when I next saw her she told me that the trip had been quite an experience for her—high peaks while performing, a sense of estrangement when she woke mornings to hear an unfamiliar language outside her hotel window. "I played twelve concerts in twelve different cities and small towns," she said. "It was all very well organized. My plane was met at every city by an embassy or consulate man, and I was provided with a car and driver. There was always a small party after the concert. Still, it was lonely at times. The altitude affected me—the stewardess passed out coramine to everyone on the plane, but it wasn't very effective—and I didn't feel like sightseeing. Also, I was on my own a lot. One weekend, I was stuck in Piura, in northern Peru, for two days after the concert. I saw 'El Gran Gatsby' twice, with subtitles. But something nice happened there. The night of the concert, a young man came up to me backstage and presented me with an invitation, carefully typed in English: 'Very distinguished concert pianist: We would be very happy if you would come to give us an interpretation of your knowledgment at the piano. We are advancely thankful for your acceptation.' He was from a local music school. I went the next morning and played for them and talked, with the help of an interpreter."

Robin had some trouble in Arequipa—the second-largest city in Peru. Ac-

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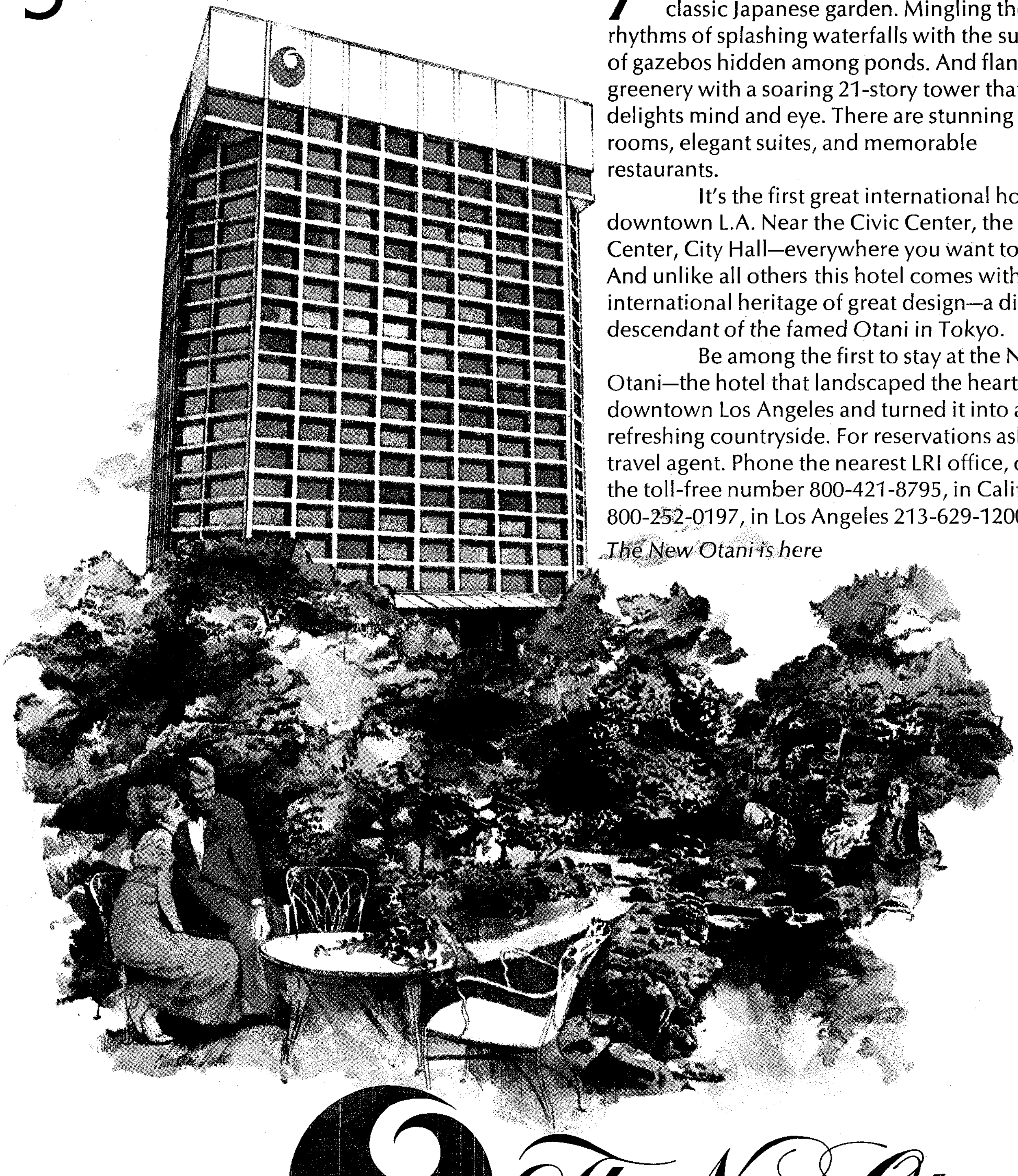

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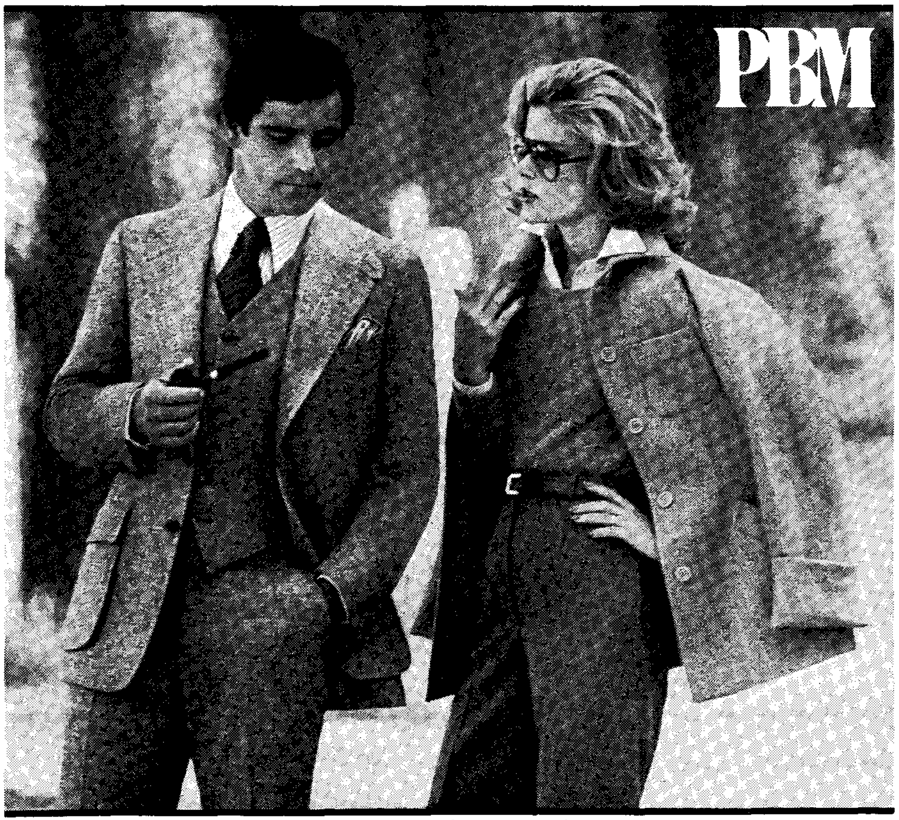
cording to her, the Arequipans have the reputation of being quite angry—even revolutionary—and during the intermission of her concert a young immigration man in chinos and dark glasses told her she would have to stop playing and come with him, because she had the wrong visa. "I needed a *visa artística*, because I was playing for money and, he said, taking soles away from Peruvians. I told him I was being paid in American dollars by my own country, but that didn't satisfy him. The American consul came backstage, but he was young and inexperienced and didn't know what to do. He went to make some phone calls, and the immigration fellow seemed ready to drag me off to jail. I figured he wouldn't arrest me onstage, so I dimmed the lights, went out, and finished the program. I certainly wasn't comfortable. He was waiting for me when I came offstage, but he'd softened somewhat. He said that I'd have to go down to immigration in the morning, and that I would be on 'personal parole' until I could get out of Arequipa. It was just a form of harassment. Ridiculous." She said that Arequipa had been bad news from the beginning. The hotel workers were on strike against government hotels the day she arrived. She took a nap before the concert, and when she woke the lights were off. There was no electricity. "I had trouble finding my contact lenses, and I was groping in the dark for the dress I'd planned to wear," she said. "Finally, I put all my clothes in a suitcase and took it to the concert hall and dressed there. What with the hassle just getting to the hall, and the arrogant kid from immigration, I was glad to get out of Arequipa."

I was curious to know what kind of audiences Robin had had, and she said, "Wonderful. The halls were always filled—anywhere from four hundred to twelve hundred people. The advertising was good—ads in papers and lots of posters. They were curious, of course, because I was not only American but a girl. They like to see women onstage; they have a high regard for them. The State Department did not specifically ask Juilliard to recommend a woman, though."

Remembering her bad experiences in New York, I asked what kind of pianos she had got, and she said, "I made out fairly well. I ran into a few P.S.O.s—piano-shaped objects. When you get those, you just grit your teeth." I said I had read that Alicia de Larrocha had cancelled a concert once because the piano was so bad, and



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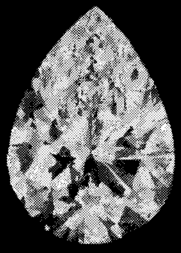

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Robin said, "At this point, I don't have that option, but an established artist like de Larrocha has every right to do so." In Trujillo, Robin thought she had struck gold. She went to the hall the afternoon of the concert to warm up. There was a nine-foot Bechstein—which many people feel is the Rolls-Royce of pianos—but when she opened the lid she found a mouse inside, eating the felt. She said she was glad that it happened before the concert. In Cuzco, she was invited to go from house to house to pick the best piano, and when she found one she liked, it was moved to the hall. The worst piano was in Ica. She had been promised a good one from the local university, but the students were on strike and wouldn't permit a piano to be moved out of the school—certainly not for an American pianist. "The man from the consulate met my plane, and the first thing he said was 'I hate to tell you this, but I don't think you're going to like the piano.' He took me straight to the hall, so I could have a look. There it was—the most ancient upright I'd ever seen. It looked like something my grandmother should have planted geraniums in. Unbelievable. I didn't even try it—just said I'd be back at eight. Before the concert, I took the top off, so there would be a little more sound. I started the program with the Chopin Waltz in E Flat Major, the 'Grand Waltz.' There are quite a few low E-flats, naturally, and the first time I struck that key it stuck completely. I tried to raise it with my finger, but it was no go. So I stood up while I was playing, reached inside, and pulled the E-flat hammer up. The audience must have wondered what in the world I was doing. It kept happening, and when I stood the audience began applauding, and then cheering. It was a circus. Then I began rearranging—playing the E-flat an octave higher. I thought, Oh, God, if You just get me through this, I'll be *such* a nice person. All the bottom notes were bad. Some didn't sound at all. I cut a lot from that program. *No* repeats. I cut transition passages, entire sections. I'm glad it happened at the beginning of the tour. If it had been toward the end, I would have had to be carried off. Afterward, I had such a headache. That evening was really a horror—an absolute horror. I'm trying to put it out of my mind." But then the optimist in her surfaced, and she added, "It was probably one of the most won-over audiences I'll ever have."

Robin said she came to realize on the tour that one of the major chal-

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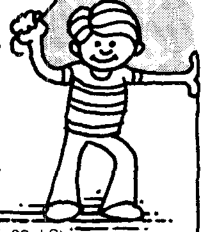

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lenges for a musician doing a number of concerts was trying to keep the playing fresh. "Toward the end, I began to think, Oh, my God, one more," she said. "I was so surprised at myself for feeling that way. But in retrospect I realize I shouldn't make a generalization based on that tour. There's a special loneliness—an anxiety—in a foreign country where you don't speak the language. I'll always remember my first night. The hotel room was cold, and I called the desk and tried to explain that I needed another blanket. I didn't think the desk man understood. Later, there was a knock on my door, and I was afraid to open it. I did, though, and it was a nice man with a blanket. But it was a major trauma for me."

THAT summer, after a vacation with her family, Robin returned to the Shawnigan Summer School of the Arts as a member of the faculty. This meant that she played a lot of chamber music, which included piano trios, quartets, quintets, and sonatas, many of them with the violinist Ruggiero Ricci, who has had an almost lifelong successful career and is considered one of the all-time great violinists. He liked Robin's playing, and asked her to be his pianist. The distinction—"pianist" instead of "accompanist"—was hers, and one that she was entitled to make. The public's taste in music has broadened to such an extent that it is no longer interested only in a display of violin technique; there is a demand for meatier music—sonatas in which the pianist is an equal partner with the violinist. Robin, though she respects the difficulty and importance of accompanying, does not want to be anyone's accompanist.

Back in New York in the fall, in her small apartment in the West Seventies, Robin continued to work with both Firkusny and Mme. Dorfmann. In October, she competed in the Naumburg Competition, as did her fellow-student Alan Weiss, and she was one of ten semifinalists, in a strong field of eighty-five. Alan shared second prize with a pianist from Cuba. First place went to Dickran Atamian, from Texas. Competitions are proliferating, in almost direct ratio to the increasing number of musicians, and although the Naumburg is one of the most important, the *Times* did not announce the piano winner until after the vocal contest, more than a week later, and then it printed three paragraphs about the winning vocalists and, almost as an afterthought, named the pianist who had come in first. Several days after the Naumburg, I spoke

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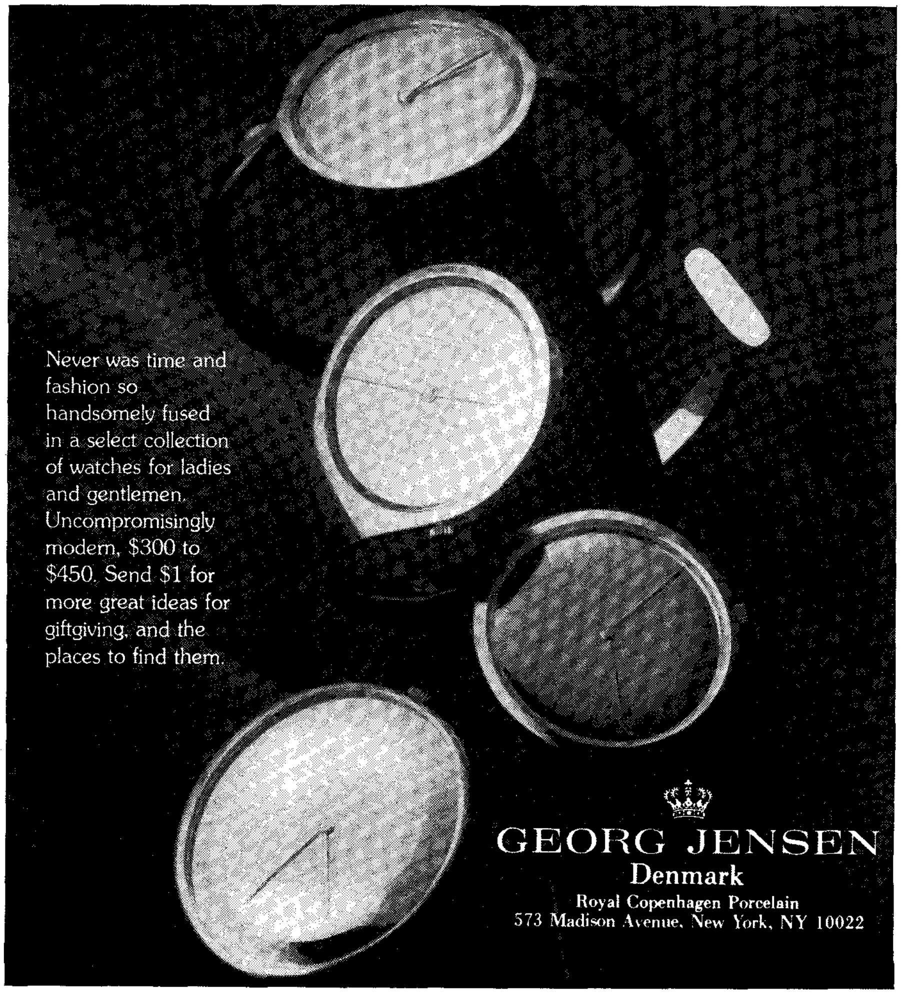

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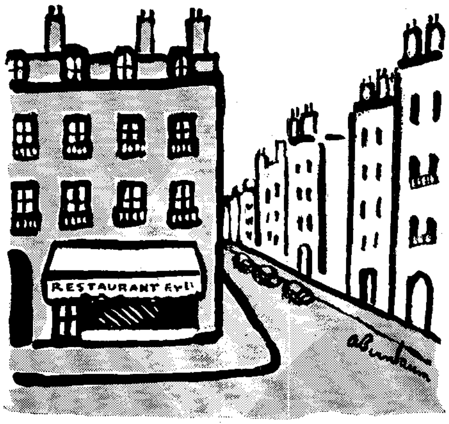
with Robin, and it was one of the few times I found her depressed. "It's a bad business, no matter how you look at it," she said. "The healthy drives get obscured by realities. I'm getting to be almost an epicure of disillusion. I've had such tremendous hopes that I fear I'm beginning to wallow in the disappointments. I begin to feel that all unhappiness is mine alone." She stopped and thought, and then said, "There are *so* many young pianists coming up that sometimes I feel I'm in a great big stew, being stirred around. There's a rumor that Juilliard has already cancelled its piano auditions for next March, because there are no places. Pianists seem to be coming out of the woodwork. I'm afraid to put a quarter in the Coke machine over there for fear a pianist will pop out playing the Chopin 'Double Thirds' Étude."

On November 16th, Robin and Alan Weiss and five other Concert Artists Guild contestants gave an all-Brahms chamber-music recital in St. Stephen's Church, on West Sixty-ninth Street. The C.A.G. had allowed Alan and Robin to pick a piano from the Steinway studio, on Fifty-seventh Street, and they were both thrilled. There were several rehearsals, and on Saturday morning, the day of the last, the seven young musicians arrived at the church to find the gate locked. They climbed over it, woke the rector, who let them in, and rehearsed in the cold building. The concert was well advertised and well attended. Between the trio Robin did, with violin and cello, and the quintet Alan played, with a string quartet, the two did ten Hungarian dances arranged for four-hand piano. Since Robin was warmed up and Alan was not, he cautioned her, in a whisper, to take it easy on the tempos until he was warmed up, too. The playing was joyous and affectionate.

At a postconcert party at Jane Harris's, Robin and Richard Fields—who now had his own apartment, a new teacher, and the gleanings of serenity that went with a new sense of well-being—discussed a competition coming up in the spring. It was the big one—the Leventritt. Robin said that one really had to evaluate whether or not it was worth the effort. She was still irked at the Naumburg. Runners-up in that contest got no exposure—"not even a nursing-home concert," she said. The Leventritt, which is held at the whim of its director, Mrs. T. Roland Berner ("Talent is like shad—when it runs, it runs," she has said), with violinists and cellists one year, pianists another, was beginning to baffle everyone. Instead of competing with one another, the contestants were measured against certain standards, and in the past two competitions no first prize had been awarded. The concerts arranged for the finalists paid little, Robin said, and by the time a pianist had taken care of air fare and hotel room and bought something decent to wear, he would be lucky if he broke even. The Leventritt is closed to performers over twenty-eight, and since Robin had just turned twenty-six, and Alan would be twenty-six in two months, the upcoming Leventritt would be the last that either of them could enter. The congestion in the field was beginning to provoke acute anxiety in pianists in their mid-twenties; there were herds of younger pianists shoving their way to the fore—a little too old to be called prodigies but young enough to impress teachers and critics. In music, a performer gets more points for potential at twenty than at twenty-five, even though many very successful artists have not hit full stride until they were in their middle or late thirties, or sometimes older. And there is so much work involved in getting ready for a big competition—polishing special pieces to satisfy repertoire requirements, which have been getting stiffer and stiffer, while the rest of one's repertoire suffers. Still, after giving it a lot of thought, Robin sent an application to the Leventritt Foundation.

Through the fall and winter, Robin continued to do solo concerts on the East Coast—in Connecticut, in North Carolina, in Washington, D.C.—and she was still playing any jazz dates that she could fit into her schedule. In January of 1976, she flew to Spokane to do the Tchaikovsky Concerto No. 1 with the Spokane Symphony, and the reviews were wonderful. The *Spokesman-Review* said, in part, "Magnificent . . . virtually awesome . . . first-rate concert pianist, and her stature will only increase with time. An electrifying performance . . . forceful and dra-



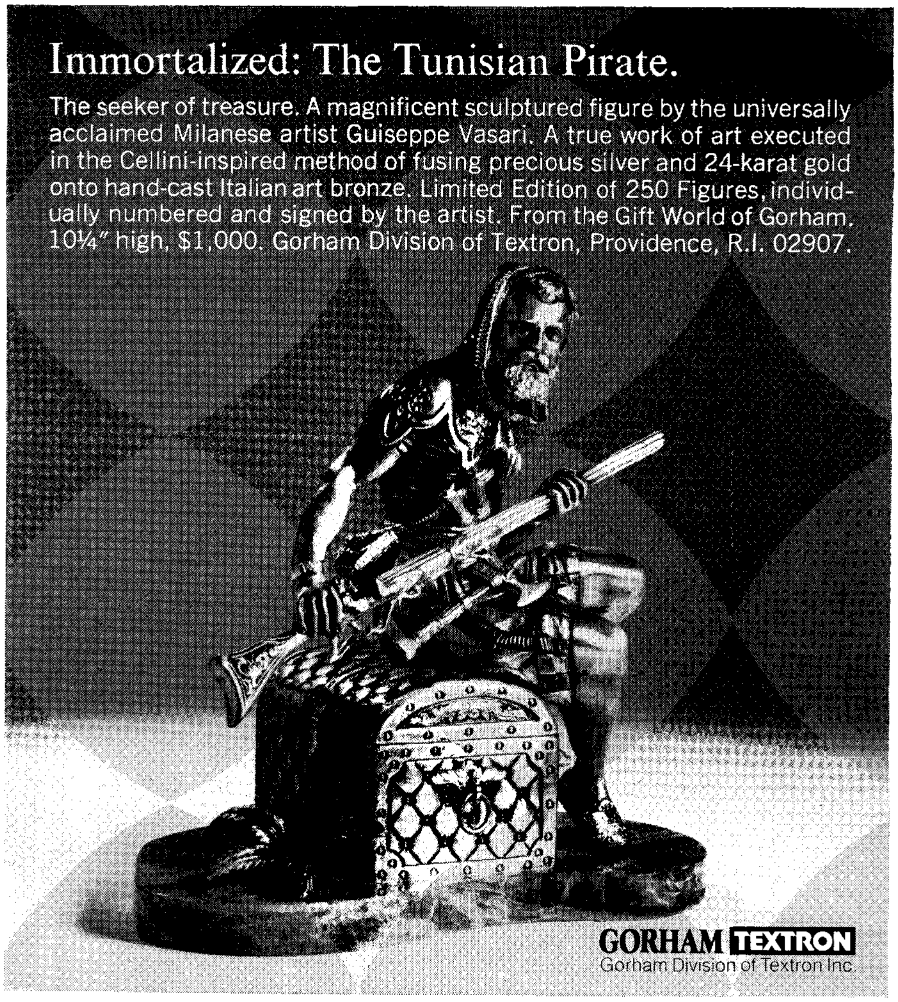
matic . . . playing with an intense passion . . . a master pianist both technically and emotionally." The *Chronicle* said, "A magnificent performance . . . brought the audience to life . . . music flowed from her piano, sweeping over the audience . . . always astute interpretation."

Robin played with Ricci in Carnegie Hall on March 14th. Their first appearance in New York together was, with the exception of a Busoni sonata, primarily a showcase for the violinist, and—though Ricci gallantly brought Robin out for repeated bows—the *Times* critic Donal Henahan treated it as such. He said Ricci was "capably assisted" by Robin, and she was disappointed at the review, and not reassured by Bloch, who said that her expectations of a more detailed mention in the review were unrealistic—that the emphasis of the recital was on Ricci and a display of his pyrotechnics, so of course the critic, no matter who it was, would concentrate on him.

In April, Robin went to Seattle to play the Rachmaninoff Second Concerto with the Seattle Symphony, and again got good reviews. The Seattle *Times* said, "Her control of the piano is exemplary, and her musicianship is consistently informed and tasteful. Moreover, she has that something—call it charisma—that is possessed by all top-flight performers."

Late in April, Robin and Alan were both accepted as contestants in the Leventritt, scheduled for May, but Robin had been invited to make another State Department tour in South America—an unusual circumstance, and proof that the first tour had been a success—which would take her out of the country for the month of June. Her repertoire had grown to include fourteen concertos and four solo recitals, or about six hours of solo playing, but at the last minute, because of the Bicentennial, the State Department asked her to program two hours of American music. She played the Copland, which two years before she had felt was not a good piece for her, but it was a scramble to find more American pieces she liked.

One day early in May, Robin told me that she had written but hadn't mailed a letter to the Leventritt Foundation saying she would be unable to compete after all. Ricci had told her that his manager, Herbert Barrett, was looking for another pianist for his "stable," and that there was a chance Robin might be asked to audition for him. Barrett is considered one of the best in the business. He does not sign



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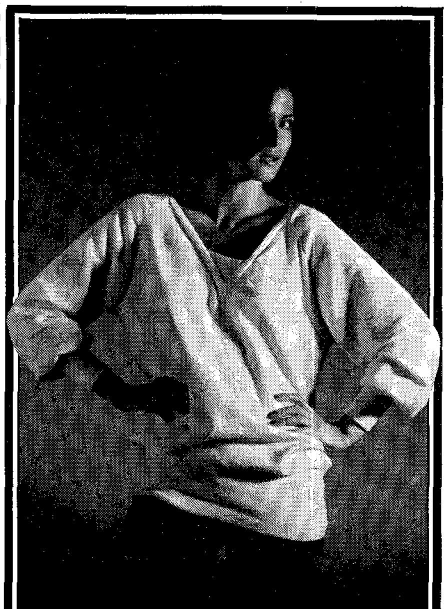
on more artists than his staff can adequately represent, and he would never represent anyone for a prepaid fee. His plan was that after he had found six pianists he would rent the Recital Hall and hear all six in one day. Getting ready for that audition, preparing all the American music, and working up the repertoire that would meet the Leventritt's requirements would be too much for Robin. "I've been carrying this letter around for a week," she said. "I hate to pass up the chance, but I can't do everything." In spite of the tour and the possibility of the Barrett audition, she seemed rather downcast. She said that at least she had found the right American music: in addition to the Copland, she would play some Menotti, Barber, and Gershwin, a piece by Paul Tufts, a Seattle composer, and some Scott Joplin rags. She said, "I love the Copland—it's a beautiful piece. I learned it for the Naumburg, which is best forgotten." She would be playing a concerto with the National Orchestra of Peru, and she planned to do the Rachmaninoff Second. "The State Department also wanted the Gershwin 'Rhapsody,' but I threw a fit," she told me. "I said, 'Please, *no*. I've been slugging out so many notes of American music I'm turning into a piece of apple pie.' Maybe I should drape myself in an American flag when I play." As she talked, she began to cheer up a bit, and the gloomy look changed to one of resolution. "Actually, I've been luckier in New York than I expected to be, though right now I want the Barrett management so much I can taste it. But I shouldn't be impatient. A boy at Juilliard won a very big new competition in Italy, months ago, and he still doesn't have a manager." She said that a friend of hers was bitter about not having won the Naumburg, because he knew that he had played well. Robin told him that being bitter was not his prerogative. "That's what someone told me, and I thought it might help him to hear it," she said. "You have to become philosophical—there are too many intangibles at work. You have to try to take it just as philosophically when you win as when you lose." She paused, and then added, "Well, everyone's entitled to a little self-indulgence after one of these things. Twenty-four hours of self-pity, and that's it."

Robin said that that morning the Dean of Juilliard had told her there was an opening at the Diller-Quaile School of Music, in Manhattan, and he wanted to recommend her. "I was flattered, but I told him, 'I'm too



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young to die. I still want to practice and try a little longer. Then I'll be happy to do something like that.' " She said then that she was wasting valuable practice time, and, also, she wanted to mail the letter, put the Leventritt out of her mind. Before we parted, she said, "One thing I tell myself, one thing I've learned—everyone, even the greatest, has ups and downs, a streak of bad breaks, and it can be very hard on you emotionally. And if you don't get great gratification from music—love it in the right way—it can finish you."

THERE are a lot of competitions in the spring—to the dismay of teachers and the deep distress of students. Many teachers abhor competitions in general. They limit repertoire growth, since students spend much too much time on certain pieces, and they are heartbreakers for the ninety-nine per cent who will lose (in the case of the Leventritt, perhaps a hundred per cent). Critics don't care for them, either. They feel that contests turn out contest players—note-perfect robots—rather than concert players. Still, both teachers and critics recognize that competitions do provide an opportunity for a student to gain recognition—managers send scouts to the big ones—and teachers do all they can to prepare their pupils for the ordeal. Probably only Horowitz could take a stand against them—as he did in July of 1976, when he said that he would accept two students to benefit the ailing Mannes College of Music, in Manhattan, on the condition that whomever he chose would promise not to enter any competitions. He said, in an interview in the *Times*, "I'm absolutely against competitions. In competitions, winners are chosen by elimination, not by excellence, and sometimes when the winner goes out on his own, there is not enough excellence. Also, sometimes it's political; it does not smell good."

Pianists who have come close but not won a contest might take cold comfort from the critic Andrew Porter's account of the 1969 Leeds International Piano Competition, in the London *Financial Times*. "This year the semi-finals produced eight pianists all of remarkable equality," Porter wrote. "Which five were chosen to go on into the final round, and how those five were ordered, is not so important. Another round or a slightly different jury might have changed that order—and at one time, indeed, it was uncertain whether the eventual winner would even make the finals." For many

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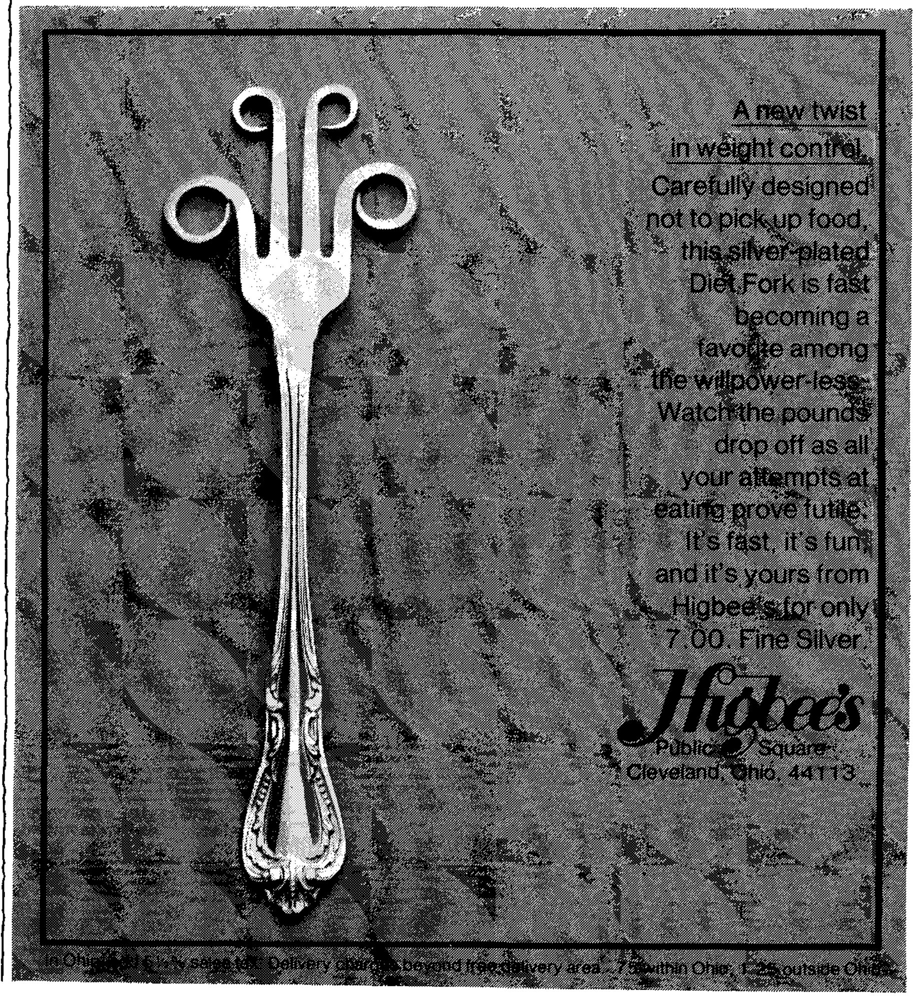

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young musicians, however, winning a big one seems the only door to a career, and they keep trying—hopping from one contest to another, New York to Leeds to Moscow to Fort Worth (where Cliburn now has his own competition), indefatigable and, most often, unrewarded. Thus, a pianist named Robert Benz appeared in Leeds in 1975, did not past the semifinals of the 1976 Leventritt, and placed first in the Liszt-Bartók International Piano Competition in Budapest four months later. The second-prize winner in that contest, Gary Steigerwalt, who also won an additional honor for his Bartók, had been one of the four Concert Artists Guild winners when Robin won, but he had been eliminated in the early stages of both the Naumburg and the Leventritt. (A rumor that neither of the winners at Budapest would be allowed to take his winnings out of Hungary proved, blessedly, to be false.)

For the 1976 Leventritt International Competition, Mrs. Berner, the daughter of Edgar Leventritt (in whose memory the competition was founded), announced that the first prize would be raised from a thousand dollars to ten thousand—matching the Cliburn Quadrennial first prize—and that all finalists would receive a thousand dollars; as usual, the winner would get a number of engagements with major orchestras. Mrs. Berner also hired the public-relations firm of Gurtman & Murtha to publicize the contest. (Sometimes it seems that competitions are competing with each other.) The Leventritt is considered so important because sixty per cent of its winners have gone on to successful careers. (One of the exceptions was the 1954 winner, Van Cliburn, whose career was dormant until 1958, when he won the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow and was honored with a ticker-tape parade down Broadway, briefly raising musicians to the popular level of Presidents, aviators, and fired generals.) Everyone but the contestants said that the ten thousand dollars was insignificant—that the prestige and the orchestral appearances were what counted. Gurtman & Murtha was so successful in its assignment that it made the contest, if not front-page, second-section-front-page news in the *Times*. As a result of the firm's efforts, CBS-TV's "60 Minutes" decided to do a segment on the Leventritt, and by the time the five finalists were heard, in Carnegie Hall, by a full, spirited house, the Associated Press, United Press International, *Time*, and *Newsweek* had become in-

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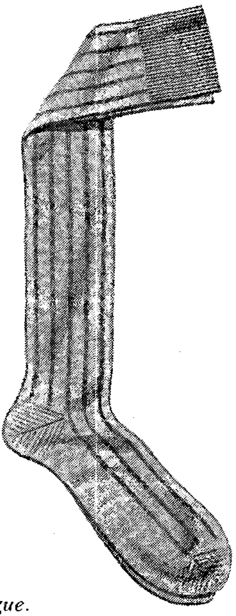

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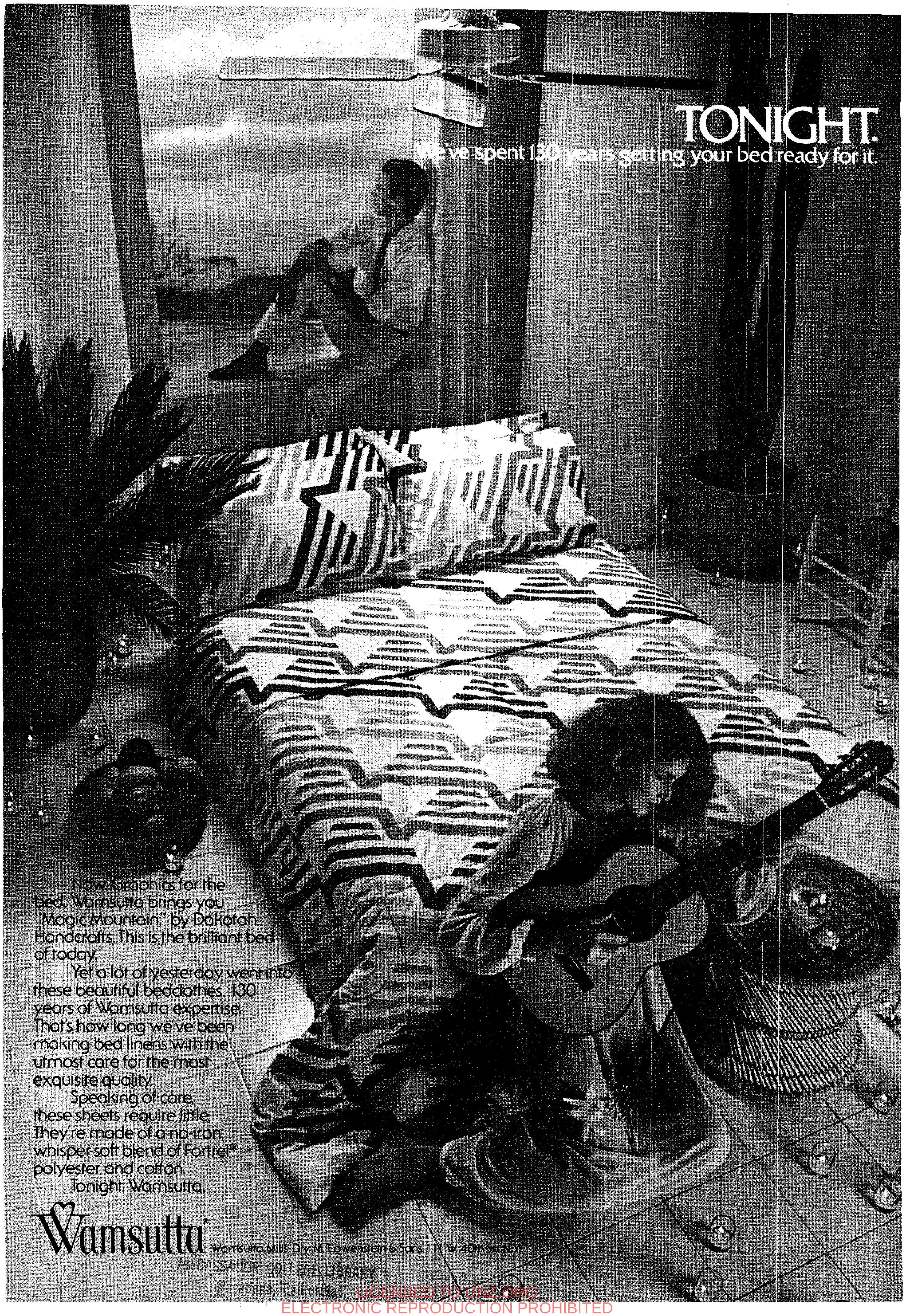

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terested. No contest since the 1958 Tchaikovsky had generated so much public enthusiasm.

The preliminaries were held in the WQXR auditorium, on the ninth floor of the Times Building. Sixty-five pianists from eighteen countries—a large number of them women—did the best they could in approximately twenty minutes before a jury of eight pianists that varied from day to day in name but not in calibre. Peter Gelb, from Gurtman & Murtha, told me that a contestant from Uruguay was a strong contender because this was his third time around. My favorite was a lovely girl with shoulder-length brown hair, in a black and white polka-dot dress, who managed to simulate ease and self-assurance and grace while she played in the glare of television lights for eight of the world's best musicians. We left the building together, and I congratulated her on her playing. She said, "Are you kidding? I *blew* it, I absolutely *blew* the concerto. Whew!" She stopped, and took a deep breath. "I feel as if I've been through a car wash with no car." I asked if this was her first competition, and learned that she had gone at the contest game in a fairly helter-skelter way—the Tchaikovsky, the Concert Artists Guild, and now the Leventritt—and had never won anything. She was a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, in Rochester, New York, and did not currently have a teacher—she couldn't afford one and didn't want one. "They only make you play the way *they* play," she said. She lived with her family in New Jersey, and was on her way to the Port Authority Bus Terminal. I asked what her plans were—the next step—and she said firmly, "If I don't win this, I'll become a waitress."

Once more, there was no Leventritt winner. Rumors in the music world were that although the pianists had been good, ten thousand dollars was a lot of money (one week earlier, the twenty-six-year-old Mark Hayes won, by two strokes, forty thousand dollars in the Byron Nelson Golf Classic), and none of them had been that good; that because of all the publicity the judges didn't want to commit themselves, to risk picking someone who would prove to be an embarrassment; that no one of the contestants was truly good enough to sustain an instant career. *Time* and *Newsweek* backed off, but "60 Minutes" went ahead with its program, which was shown at the beginning of September. The only snag the TV crew encountered was getting some of the contestants to agree to be filmed while calling the foundation to find out whether they had made the semifinals. A number refused, but three finally agreed.

DURING the Leventritt finals, in Carnegie Hall, Robin was next door, in Carnegie Recital Hall, auditioning for Herbert Barrett and his five salespeople. The audition was closed to outsiders, and after it was over, Barrett told Robin he would let her know his decision in a few days. The following Wednesday night, I saw Robin and Richard Fields, and they had been celebrating with champagne. That afternoon, Barrett had called Robin down to his office to sign a contract. Her cheeks were pink and there was a sparkle in her eyes, and she told me that she had played very, very well at the audition. Robin had always been her own severest critic, and it was the first time since I had met her that she had ever said any such thing.

Robin and Richard talked about the Leventritt. They seemed to know quite a few of the contestants, and Robin said of a French pianist, "He already has a good career in Europe. Losing this can only hurt him." He was rumored to be a favorite of the judges in the preliminaries, but in the semifinals he seemed very tired, his playing did not hold up, and he was eliminated. (Everyone at Juilliard was only too aware of a young pianist who had signed with a major manager. The manager urged him to enter a Leventritt, and when he did and didn't win, the manager dropped him.)

Richard was now busy accompanying some of Juilliard's best violinists in master classes and recitals, and he was getting, for the first time, some recognition and acclaim. Robin was urging him to enter next year's Concert Artists Guild competition.

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linist who happens to be at an elegant cocktail party and also happens to have his violin with him, plus an invisible hundred-and-ten-man orchestra to accompany him, when Joan Crawford taunts him into playing. It is hard to imagine any pianist surviving—or for a moment submitting to—the whacks across the knuckles with a cane that Ann Todd accepts from James Mason; his hitting her there, of all places, makes no sense at all. Then there is the more recent, hilarious "The World of Henry Orient," in which two adolescents have an implausible crush on a concert pianist—a pianist so inept that in real life he would not be permitted to play with the worst amateur orchestra in the world. And impresarios, who are, after all, managers, don't wear black cloaks and opera hats and look like George Sanders, if Herbert Barrett is typical. They are indistinguishable from lawyers or accountants or bank vice-presidents. They are businessmen, and music is a business—and, given its emotional components, a well-run one. There are, of course, some managers whose tactics are highly suspect, but the same can be said of literary agents, doctors—people in almost any profession.

Barrett is a middle-aged man with gray-brown hair, dark-rimmed glasses, and a direct manner. He is not unfriendly, is even congenial, but in talking to him one is struck by his choice of words, his ability to come to the point. A week or so after Robin signed her contract, I called on him in his office, on the seventeenth floor of a building at Broadway and Sixty-first Street. It is a vast, cheerful place, with yellow walls, a tweed rug, several abstract prints, and, just inside the door, an enormous floor-to-ceiling evergreen tree. Behind his large oak desk, on top of the air-conditioner, are five small ivy plants, visibly struggling for life. I was reminded of the wide range of musicians Barrett represents. After pulling a chair up for me, Barrett said, "To begin with, I'm pleased that we're representing Robin McCabe. I had a very good feeling, as we all did in the office, when I heard her play."

Robin had referred to the five people who had been present at her audition with Barrett as "salespeople," and I asked Barrett if that was indeed what they were called. "Without making it sound too flossy, basically we are all impresarios," he said. "Everyone here is a manager, who is interested in developing careers. However, we do call them salesmen, or salespeople, or sometimes scouts." He said that everyone had reacted to Robin with enthusi-

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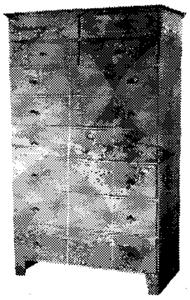

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asm. "We had been primed beforehand, of course. We have represented Mr. Ricci for many years, and we respect his opinion very much. He told us that he had been playing with Robin in Canada, and that he thought she was a winner. We heard her play with him in Carnegie Hall and were impressed. And then we had her play for us in the small hall. Before that, we'd had very enthusiastic endorsements from Rudolf Firkusny, whom we do not manage but whom we respect very much, and letters from the higher echelon at Juilliard. In other words, I rely on people whose judgment I respect, who know more about technique and musicianship than I do. When Robin was about to become part of our family, we had been indoctrinated. And that, essentially, is how we choose. First, by the time they come to us—those who want major management—they are ready for careers. They have years of work and many performances under their belt. Their teachers are always enthusiastic—if they weren't, they wouldn't have been working with those particular pianists. Their techniques are formidable, and they have all that experience behind them. Then the question is—a very subjective question—whether the charisma is there. I think it is essential, and you can tell if a performer has it, no matter whether the audience is very knowledgeable or has come simply to hear a performance, as it would come to a film or the theatre, and you know pretty quickly whether the audience is reacting to the person onstage. It's not just talk. There is something very specific about that cosmo-magnetic fluid that flows between the performer and you and has you sitting on the edge of your seat. Charisma takes different forms. Some major artists come onstage looking like Uriah Heep, and others come out with this enormous élan, like Rubinstein. When he hits a wrong note, he looks around almost proudly, as if he were saying, 'Look what *I* did.' Maybe it boils down to having a powerful personality. Whatever it is, we all feel quite strongly that Robin has it."

I had shown a Barrett brochure, containing pictures of his artists, to a pianist friend, who looked at the lineup and said, "They'll eat Robin alive." (Some are unknown to the general public but are considered giants-to-be in the music world.) When I told Barrett about this reaction, he said, "The curious thing about this business is that, if we have a very successful instrumentalist, instead of hurting the others it helps them. People come to us for more

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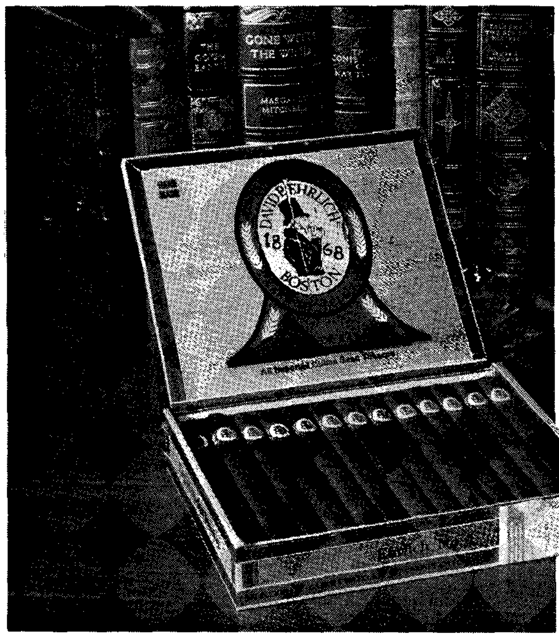

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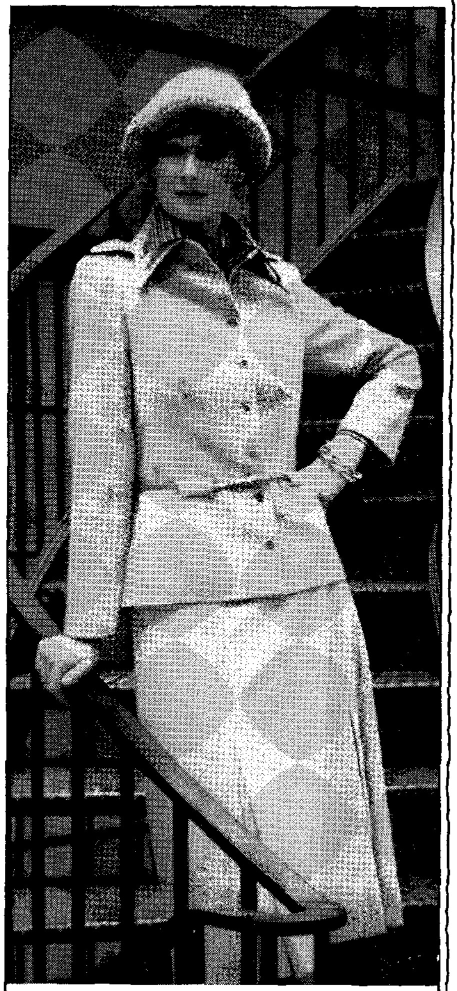

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of the same. We managed Wilhelm Backhaus—one of the giant ones—and it helped all the other pianists on our list, because it made everyone conscious that Barrett management signified quality. So I think basically—especially with pianists, who are far and away the most popular instrumentalists for selling—the bigger stars help the smaller ones." He said that in terms of demand, violinists ran a relatively poor second to pianists, and cellists a poor third, and that this was probably as it should be, since pianists outnumbered the others.

It had become clear that orchestral appearances were extremely valuable for performers, and I asked Barrett if his firm was able to arrange them for his artists. He said, "Well, we know all the conductors, and we arrange auditions for the artists, and the rest is up to the artist. Conductors aren't apt to audition someone who does not come recommended by management or by a *very* successful musician or fellow-conductor. As for solo recitals, our salespeople spend a certain number of weeks on the road promoting them. What has happened in the business, if you want a little bit of the background, is that twenty or twenty-five years ago there were a number of local managers in cities throughout the country who risked their own capital, or that of clubs or associations that they guided, to put on concerts by solo artists. Then, as each manager either retired or died, instead of being replaced by another local manager, he was replaced by a university. Each university has its own concert series, providing concerts for its students and also for the surrounding communities. For instance, in 1954 Boston University became the sponsor of Aaron Richmond's Celebrity Series. A university today has a person who is the equivalent of a professor, or a football coach, except that he's the director of cultural activities. Twenty or twenty-five years ago, music departments were often relegated to some side street off campus, somewhere near the pharmacy school. Now universities are building arts centers—each more opulent than the next. And it is to the directors of cultural activities that our salesmen address themselves, trying to convince them that the Robin McCabes are the Horowitzes of the future."

I had heard that many musicians, no matter how experienced, were tortured by stagefright, and I asked Barrett if any of his artists were afflicted with it to such an extent that they didn't enjoy playing. "They *all* suffer,

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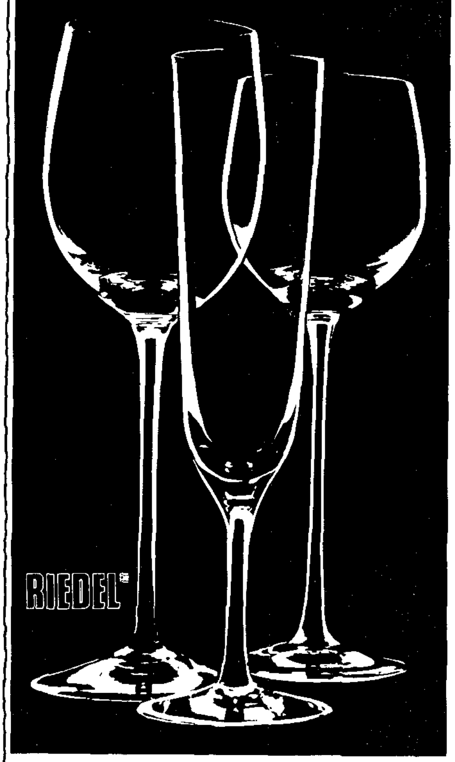

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but they all enjoy playing," he said emphatically. "I've been in the business many years, and I don't know any artist who isn't scared before going onstage. Backhaus certainly was. He was one of the most organized people I ever met. For his hobby, he liked to study railroad timetables—he was that precise. But when he gave a concert here, after a number of years' absence, he was terrified. Rubinstein was backstage with him, saying, 'Go *on!*' and trying to push him onstage."

Reluctantly, I brought up the subject of money, but Barrett said, "You can talk about money—I live by it. An established artist can command as much as ten thousand dollars a performance. A newcomer, like Robin, would get a thousand. We don't bother with smaller fees. A thousand dollars is rather good for a pianist, but for a violinist, who has an accompanist to pay, double air fares, and hotel bills, a thousand dollars is no longer a thousand dollars."

In recent years, more and more women have become prominent on the music scene. They suffer no physical inferiority to men—as in sports—and, as the four-foot-nine-inch Alicia de Larrocha proves almost every time she performs, they can often outplay them. Even before women's lib, critics stopped saying of a woman performer, "She plays like a man"—which at one time was the highest accolade they could come up with. I had discussed the gradual increase in the number of women performers with various people. One critic suggested that women used to become discouraged early and quit to marry and have families. A psychiatrist felt that until recently women were not encouraged to flaunt the kind of ego essential to a performer. A public-relations woman mentioned "the ladies"—women went to matinées and took their husbands to evening concerts, and they would rather watch a man perform than a woman.

Five of the nine pianists Barrett has under contract are women, and before I left I asked him to explain the phenomenon. "I took them on because they were the best I'd heard at the time," Barrett said. "I surprised myself. I counted them up and said, 'Well, I really *am* liberated.' "

Robin signed a three-year contract, and was told that if she proved to be a "repeater"—was asked back again and again—there was every reason to expect a fairly successful career. Barrett told me it was not possible to predict who would be a repeater. "It's a funny thing," he said. "It's almost traditional that when an artist plays a concert

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somewhere they say very nice things about him, and he comes back to us and, very sincerely, tells us he was loved in that particular town, and I'm sure he was. It's part of the affable, convivial, enthusiastic reaction that follows a concert. But sometimes he will be almost immediately forgotten. At least, he isn't asked back. The test is in the actual repeating of performances. And that involves more than talent and charisma. It has to do with the feeling of the audience that the artist *cares*—that he is enjoying being there. It may seem petty, but it's important that he remember the birthday of someone there, or that he go to the post-concert party, which looms very large in some communities, or that he take the time to hear some of the young hopefuls. All kinds of things. But most of all it's the excitement that he generates and whether it will last long enough for them to remember him and ask him back."

WHEN Robin returned to New York in the fall of 1976, she found an apartment in a building filled with musicians, and Juilliard provided her with a Steinway grand; no more Sunday scrambles looking for a piano to practice on. She was slimmer and more chic than when I had first met her. The demure dresses had been replaced by trim slacks and sleek black turtlenecks, and she was wearing a handsome suède coat. Robin had completed all the work toward her doctor's degree except the dissertation, and she was still teaching at Juilliard and working on her own repertoire, which included more and more chamber music for concerts with Ricci. The two made frequent trips out of town to give recitals—sometimes joined by a cellist for a program of trios. Barrett had begun arranging auditions for Robin with different conductors, but, because music seasons are planned one or two years in advance, she couldn't expect many concerts through Barrett until the fall of 1977. She could expect to be asked occasionally to fill in for another pianist, and on Wednesday, December 1st, she got a call from Tittica Roberts, a vice-president of the Barrett firm. William Masselos was scheduled to play the Mozart K. 482 with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, in Minnesota, the following Saturday night, but he was sick. Was the concerto in Robin's repertoire and was she free that night? There are twenty-one Mozart piano concertos, and K. 482 was one of those that Robin plays. She was going to give a concert with Ricci in Dallas on Monday, but she could change her plane ticket and go to St. Paul first. Miss Roberts said that the arrangement wasn't definite, and she would call back. Robin would have liked her first Barrett date to be less haphazard, but who knew when the next chance would come? She got out the music for K. 482 and began going over it. Late in the afternoon, Miss Roberts called back and said that the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra had gone to a different manager and picked a pianist who was considered a consummate Mozart interpreter—Rudolf Firkusny.

Robin told me about this on a Saturday in January. She was going to Baltimore the following Monday to audition for the conductor of the Baltimore Symphony, and she had spent the day at Juilliard practicing on a piano with a very stiff action. She wasn't knocking the piano on loan from the school, she said—she was delighted to have it—but the action was very loose. "If I blow on it, the keys go down."

I asked about Richard Fields and Roman and Alan. Richard had, on the spur of the moment, gone to Vienna to study, and Roman, who had got his degree, was working at Juilliard as an accompanist. Alan was completing work for his doctorate and practicing harder than ever. He was gradually beginning to get more concerts.

IN March, Juilliard held piano auditions after all, and Robin's sister Rachelle flew to New York to audition. Bloch had met her in Puyallup two years earlier when he went to Seattle to hear a production of the "Ring" cycle in English. On the basis of their experience with Robin, both Firkusny and Mme. Dorfmann were interested in her, so it was no surprise to anyone that she was accepted.

In early May, the girl in the polka-dot dress whom I had met at the Leventritt called and told me what she'd been up to. She had, as she had said she would, become a waitress. But she continued to practice and she saved her money, and she rented Carnegie Recital Hall for May 14th, at 5:45 P.M., and paid Norman J. Seaman a modest sum to publicize her début recital. Hedging her bets and bucking the system, she used the name Lily von Ballmoos and revealed nothing about her background in the flyers or the recital program. The *Times*, proving that it does indeed cover all events, sent John Rockwell. He seemed bemused at the mystery surrounding the performer, and the unusual name, but he gave her a great review. She said she had received no offers from any managers, and now she was looking forward to a summer at Tanglewood, playing nothing but chamber music.

Late in May, Robin dropped in to say goodbye. She was leaving in a few days to give a concert in California, and then she would go to Washington, for a week at home and a vacation at her family's cottage in Idaho before going back to Canada for another season as a faculty member at Shawnigan.

I asked how the audition for the conductor in Baltimore had gone, and she laughed and said, "It was a fiasco. I was on a treadmill of talent being whisked past the conductor. He was obviously trying to fulfill all his commitments in one day. We were each allowed approximately twelve minutes in which to make an indelible impression. If he liked my playing, he'd get in touch with Mr. Barrett. I must admit, I felt for a while as if I were in a nightmare version of a competition." If she had once been "highly demolishable," clearly she no longer was. The Barrett contract seemed to have given her a sense of security, a knowledge that no single experience would be the end of her, a feeling that there was a lot to look forward to.

Robin had been silent for a moment, and then she said, "Maybe someday the public's tastes will change. Maybe music will become a necessity instead of a luxury, and there will be room for more of us."

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•

If Leonardo da Vinci had been born a female the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel might never have been painted.—*Philadelphia Welcomat.*

And if Michelangelo had been Siamese twins, the work would have been completed in half the time.

•

The public's disaffection with Congress, he believes, stems from a misunderstanding of its constitutional role as bodyolasykoppobedyto the administrative functionos of the executive branch.—*Salt Lake City Deseret News.*

And the public doesn't like some of the laws, either.

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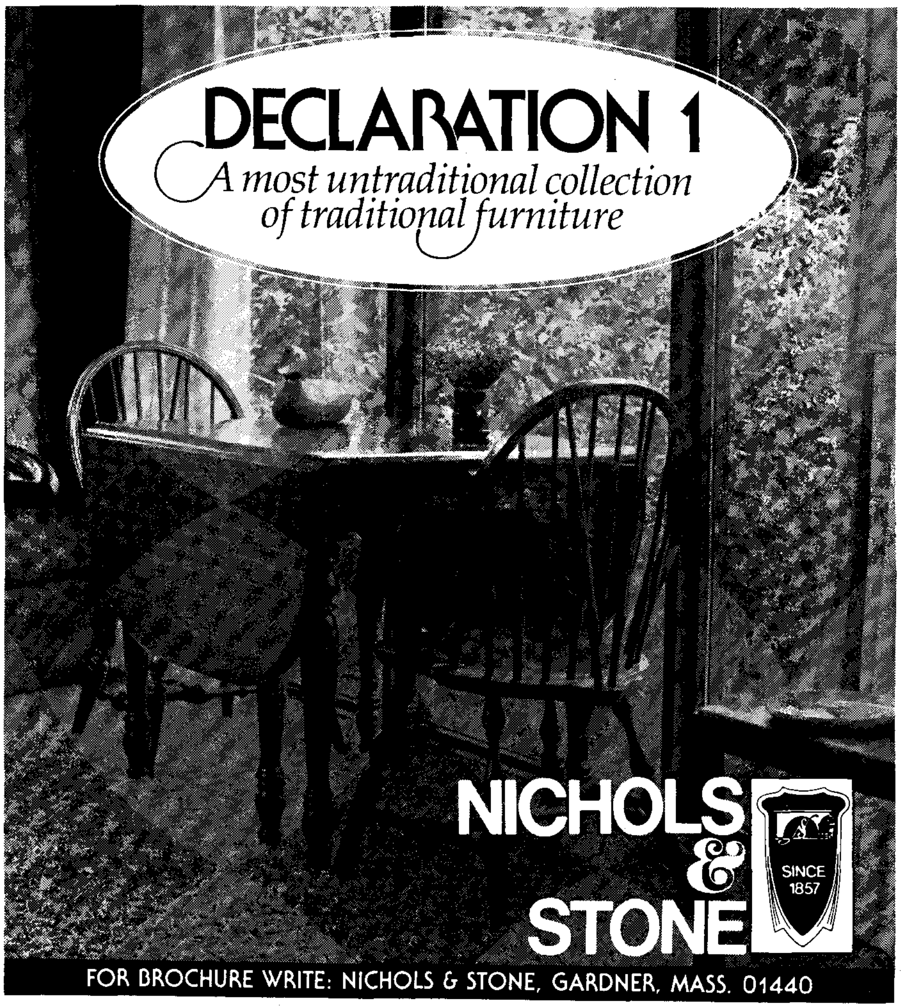

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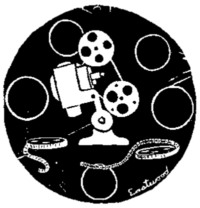
THE CURRENT CINEMA

Regency

GALLOPING inflation, corruption in high places, the sleepless nights of the powerful, the puny budget of any possible usurper. Not Nixon's reign but—four years after the death of Louis XIV—the reign of the French Regent, the uneasy custodian named Philippe II, Duc d'Orléans, in charge of the land during the minority of the sickly little boy who was to survive, against all forecasts and in the face of many hopes, to become King Louis XV of a France on the road to revolution. Bertrand Tavernier's "Let Joy Reign Supreme," with a script by Jean Aurenche and the director, is a sage and splendid picture that speaks of history in the present tense, as Rossellini's magnificent later films do. It opens on Palm Sunday of 1719, in Brittany. The Bretons, under the Marquis de Pontcallec (Jean-Pierre Marielle), are clamoring to become an independent republic, with the promised help of Spain. Agents of the government are shipping kidnapped Breton beggars and prostitutes to populate Louisiana. Paris is further upsetting the stability of the country by introducing paper money that nobody believes in, that people treat as if it were as dispensable and forgettable as green stamps are today.



Philippe Noiret plays Philippe d'Orléans. This musical man of history, whose compositions fill the score of the picture, is shown as a gaudy, succinct mortal, not wholly bad, living a life of debauchery and disquiet, hounded by his own suspicion that God is evil. He is plump and agitated, with a nose like a quill: surrounded by pretenses, costume balls, disguises, playacting. Surgeons wearing masks of long-beaked birds perform grandiose, unskilled operations. His daughter is shown to the Regent: she lies dead under a sheet on the barbaric operating table. He says that he will miss the pain she would have caused him. He sleeps fitfully. It is the daytime he most fears. The rising in Brittany is a cause for concern to him, although it is led by the Marquis de Pontcallec, a poor noble, and the flitting attention of the age convinces most of the other highly bred that nobles and peasants cannot mix even if all are beggars. A courtesan called Émilie (Christine Pascal) joins the irreligious Philippe at a Mass. He is thrown into almost as much consternation about the conduct of the ceremony as the Abbé Dubois is. The Abbé, played by Jean Rochefort, is the Regent's uncertain ally: an edgy, cross man, ambitious to be an archbishop but falling into an unholy tantrum over learning the Latin pronouncements that an archbishop needs to know.

The theme of the film has to do with the sorts of power which exist only in the dark, as follies of grandeur, as bad dreams, as plans that have to be secreted. Duchesses behave like prostitutes, going to bed with the potentates of the moment to save their lives, and never mind their souls in this age of satanic celebrations; prostitutes often behave as duchesses are supposed to, with kindliness and breadth of thought. Tavernier shows us the *luxe*, the muddle, the cruelty of the time. Even lovers may be involved in rival conspiracies; even friends readily betray one another in the matters of expediency and politicking which are the stuff of the film. There is a witty scene between Dubois and the British Ambassador in which His Excellency speaks fluent sly French in an abominable upper-class English accent. A political courtier of high degree spins a globe and confuses America with Africa. The Marquis de Pontcallec can see that the Bretons meant to be sent to Louisiana as slaves are scarcely shippable, being skeletal from hunger.

Everyone is jockeying for authority. The 1715 adventuring of the English Pretender, with French support, has set Europe afire. The Regent suddenly smells his own left hand, thinks it stinking with the rot of the epoch, and commands the unequipped Dubois to amputate, calling beautiful coaches for the harshly summoned-up emergency and forcing them to drive so fast that one overturns a cart with a child in it. The child is killed. The Regent, hellbent on making Dubois suffer by being pressed into amateur surgery—because Dubois, in spite of the Regent's notion that all nobles are his allies, has beheaded four Catholic Breton nobles to coax the Protestant English into aiding France—passes out some coins to the child's young sister and speeds on in one of the coaches. Peasants burn the other coach with bundles of straw set alight by torches. The revolution is augured.

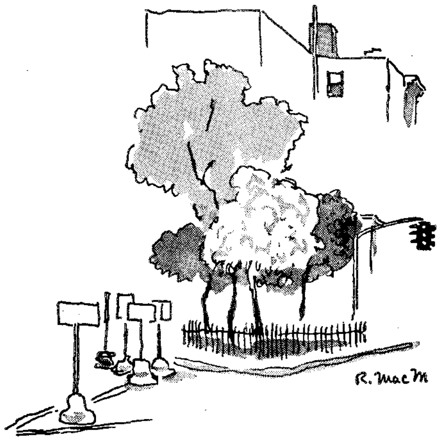
Tavernier is at pains to show us a Regent who is in the grip of the times but who has, all the same, a frighteningly accurate sense of what is to come. He feels perpetually ill, perhaps because of this foresight. A doctor says, "Above all, stay cheerful. It's a remedy for the plague," and promises to write for the poor about his curative insight. "Unfortunately, the poor can't read," says the Regent dryly. Tavernier's sharply detailed film travels with vivacity and speed. The clerics are seen as pillars of the state and of the status quo because they are pillars of the bank. The bank is meant as a preservative for the fortunate, but Mme. de Bourbon (Marina Vlady) reviles its paper money for doubling the cost of living: the living, naturally, being hers.

Philippe Noiret, the star of Tavernier's earlier "The Clockmaker," has never done anything better than the new film, and never had so great an acting chance. In this putrescent land, the Regent is an angry, sorrowing character, unforgiving even of himself. He is a vagrant spirit, with the temperament of a wastrel but the foreboding grief of a wise man. Perhaps, Noiret suggests, it is because he dreads taking on the authority of his office that this clever and delicate figure hides his self-loathing in charades, superstitions, rapier contempt, seigneurial impulse. At a session with a little girl who foretells his future by dropping candle wax into water and seeing a crown form, he says, almost to himself, "Shall I be the mourner Prince?" He has buried four men of the royal blood. Will he bury a fifth? But it was France itself, of course, three-quarters of a century later, that was to do the burying, for good and all. The peasant sister of the casually run-over child refuses to let anyone close his eyes after his death: a royal coach is burning, and she wants him to gaze.

POLAND's unwitting variant of "Brief Encounter" has come to us in Krzysztof Zanussi's absorbing "A Woman's Decision" (terrible title). It begins with the sound of a woman humming. There is a shot of her taking in the milk at the front door of a new, shoebox-shaped Warsaw flat. The woman, called Marta, is played by Maja Komorowska. She is married to an unresponsive man, called Jan (Piotr Fronczewski), who is nice enough but incapable of pliancy or physical impulse. His thin face looks like two profiles pressed together. They have a son of about nine, obviously much loved in silence by his father and more impetuously by his mother. Marta is a union official. Because, however much she would prefer not to admit it, she is injured by Jan's iron control, she falls for an instructor in physical education whose whole character seems to lie in liberty. He likes jokes, double somersaults, sailing, risks. The analogy with Noël Coward's film lies in Marta's return to her husband after she has run away, and in his misbegotten instinct to restrain himself from ever saying that he loves her.

The more subtle and rare parts of the script—which was written by the director—have to do not with the love story and renunciation but with the character of the woman. Again and again, we see her in situations in which she chooses to blackmail people morally with her own decency. An older woman at Marta's office, accused of stealing fifty thousand zlotys—almost certainly someone has forged her signature, though she is afraid she might have signed something carelessly—confronts Marta with truths in two key scenes played in the women's lavatory. She says that Marta pays a lot of attention to her good opinion of herself, to her self-esteem. But the director is too intelligent to make Marta an out-and-out pietist. He is not saying that she is inhumanly good; she hints to her husband that she is sitting on a powder keg because, most humanly, she is frustrated by his implacability. But Jan won't pick up the hints, or can't: out of pride, perhaps, or reticence, or even out of his greater maturity, although he consistently does things at odds with her temperament and always makes the hidebound choice when they are alone together.

The end of the film is sentimentally easy, but a great deal of the rest of it is hard-won and exact. Zanussi goes as far as he probably can in Poland to draw for us a picture of a scared, line-toeing office director, obviously a symbolic Communist official. The boss bullies the suspected older woman into giving notice, and then pleads blood pres-



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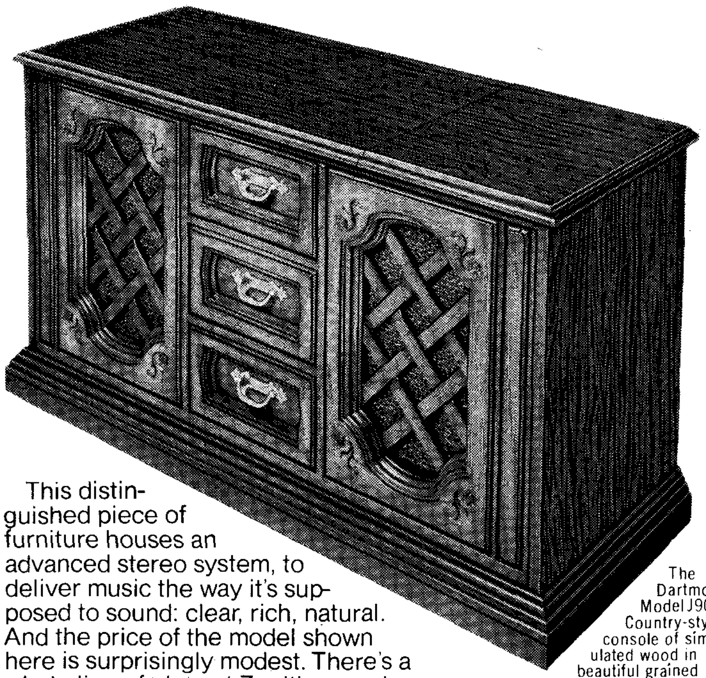

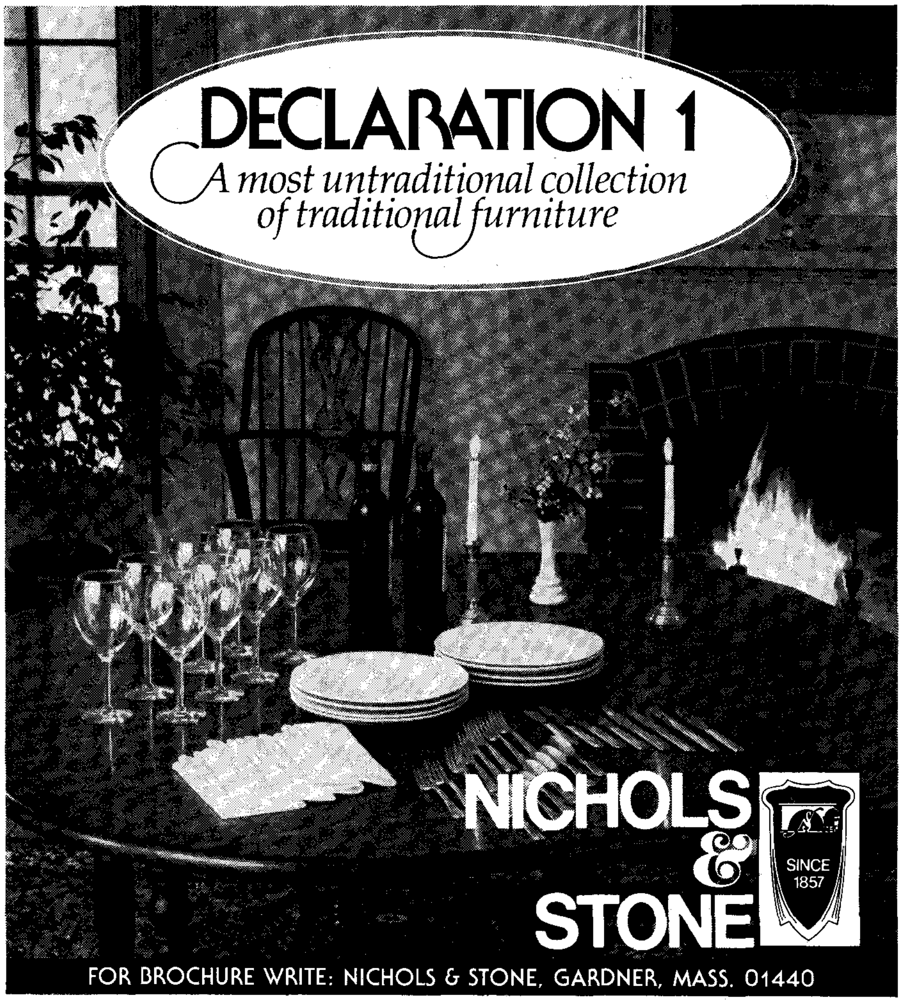
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sure and strain after he manhandles Marta for standing up to him. There is a scene that cuts to the bone of things when Marta's mother-in-law, in hospital, very ill, tells her in plain words not to humiliate Jan by staying with him out of pity just to placate her own sense of herself. The advice is acute. It seems to have even more effect than the words of Marta's office colleague on her decision to try running away. At a crucial point in the film, there is an emphatic repetition of an earlier shot of the hospital corridor with the corridor nearly empty, a kettle steaming in the foreground and a back view of a figure disappearing round the corner at the far end. This was the time of the turning point in Marta's mind, Zanussi is telling us.

Marc Simenon's "By the Blood of Others"—made by Georges Simenon's son, who must be tired of having this said—is ostensibly a thriller about a maniacal criminal, but it is really a study in sorts of opportunism and self-importance. We are in provincial France. A deranged young rapist (Yves Beneyton), armed with a rifle, breaks in on Geneviève (Denise Filiatrault) and her seventeen-year-old daughter, Caroline (Nathalie Guérin), and holds them hostage in a shuttered stone country house. In the morning, he telephones the mayor, played by Bernard Blier, setting the ransom: he demands that within five hours, in exchange for the victims' lives, the most beautiful girl in the village be sent to him. The mayor, a casually dressed, usually buoyant fellow often to be found in the village café, feels that he must at least make the gesture of deferring to the prefect of the *département* (Claude Piéplu) before he takes any steps to rescue the hostages. Officials cluster in the countryside outside the house. The prefect arrives like a battleship, wearing a dark suit and a misleadingly decisive expression. An elderly priest (Charles Vanel), wise in the ways of public men, gets slowly drunk lying on the grass near a hedge. It is decided that a pretty prostitute (Mylène Demongeot) is the person to send in to appease the lunatic. Fetched by official car, she is told horrifyingly little about the danger of the undertaking; the men regard this sort of thing as her job. She wants payment in advance. The prefect says with patronizing dignity that he can arrange for the money to be paid out of an emergency fund by tomorrow: a plan plainly made to save any embarrassing names on checks today or any loss of his own

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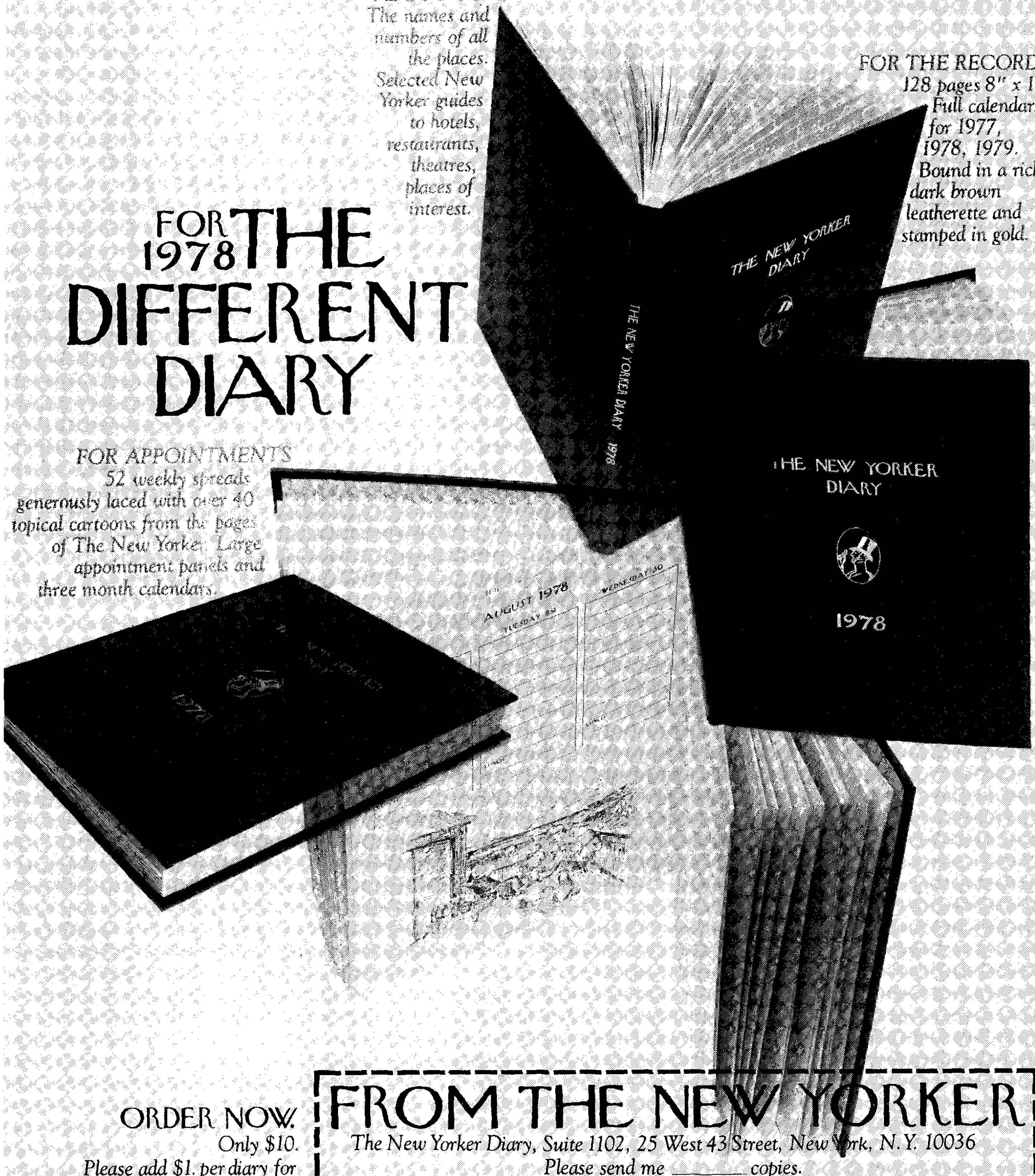
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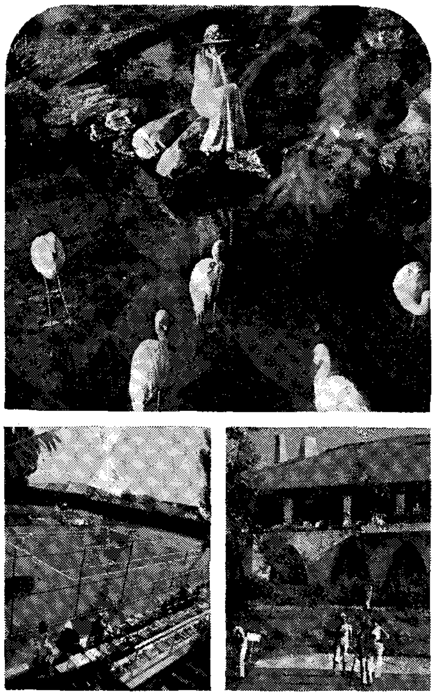

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cash. No, she says when she has found out more. You think we'll do things your respected wives wouldn't do, but money isn't worth dying for. One of the bravest of the bunch, she wins her point, walks alone toward the barricaded house, and loses her life to the rapist because the prefect, in a spasm of self-regard, has ordered his men to open fire, making the rapist retaliate out of panic. A doctor (Francis Blanche) is then dispatched to look after the hostages: a tubby, hesitant figure, stripped to show that he has no weapons, and again sent at no risk to the prefect, who has been hypocritically enraged by the doctor's reluctance to go. The doctor comes out alive, having ministered to the wounded woman hostage, and, by any standard, needing sedatives himself. The rapist then demands the favors of the mayor's daughter, played by Mariangela Melato (of Lina Wertmüller's "Swept Away"), whom he saw the day before. The mayor is outraged. This is not a job for his daughter. Practically everyone in control here is hermetically sealed in officialdom: prefect, mayor, a police chief. The cowardliness is abject. The aim of the affair seems to be to save faces, not lives.

Then the mayor's daughter asserts herself and walks into the frightening stone house, where the rifle sticks out of a window and the criminal's wild eyes stare at things through a chink. It is the ravaged old priest, his speech loosened by drink and age, who tells the gathering what he thinks of its handling of the affair. Middle-class puppetry. The only person who has died is the class's outcast, who tonically declined to disguise her motives. By the blood of another, the symbols of propriety have survived. By the tongue of a drunken and good old man, they are shown to us as uniforms packed with office but lacking people inside.

—Penelope Gilliatt

Editors' Note: Penelope Gilliatt and Pauline Kael alternate as *The New Yorker's* film critic, in periods of six months each. With this column, Miss Gilliatt concludes her current six-month period. Miss Kael will appear next week.

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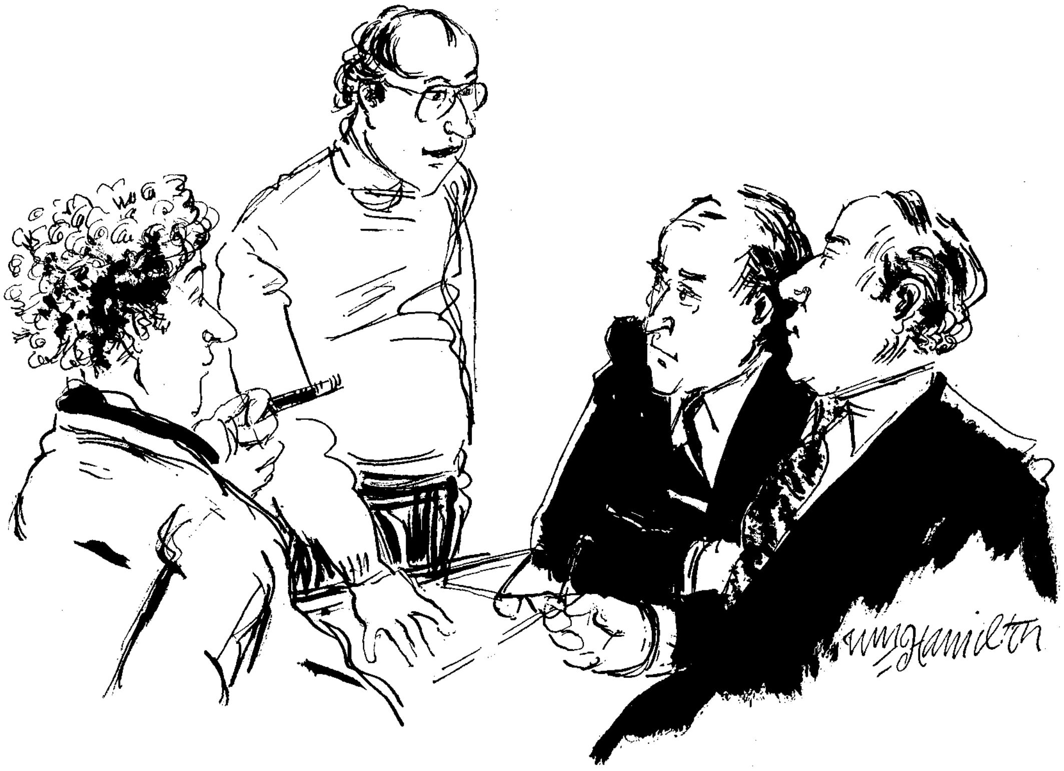
WHY is Britain not a great power today? It won the war. It was the dominant West European power in 1945. If it had been weakened by the years of struggle, so had every other nation except the United States. Yet Britain today is not only the weakest of the major West European states but the one with the most problematic future. A nation that was Europe's richest a generation ago now has a lower level of average individual wealth—gross national product per capita—than Austria or Finland. The only West European countries that today stand below Britain on this index of national wealth (as the World Bank calculates it) are Ireland, Spain, Portugal, and Italy—and Italy is there only by averaging in the poverty-stricken Mezzogiorno: Sicily, Sardinia, and the south. The Northern Italian is more prosperous than the average Briton. An industrial economy that was the biggest in Western Europe in 1945 is now hardly more than half the size of the West German economy and not much more than two-thirds the size of the French economy. Industrial Britain today is roughly the size of four Belgiums, or one and a half Canadas.

The usual explanations for this economic retardation have to do with a historically low annual rate of industrial growth, persistently low levels of investment within the country (City of London money has gone to overseas investment), and a traditional undervaluation of entrepreneurial skills. Or people blame the frequency of strikes in Socialist Britain. (Americans tend to favor the last explanation, even though the United States has had in some years a much worse, if less well publicized, strike record than Britain's. Last year, we lost nearly four and a half times as many hours from industrial disputes per member of the manufacturing work force as Britain.) But Britain's problem is not that something has drastically changed in its national performance. The country's economy actually functions pretty much as it always has functioned. Growth since the war has even been somewhat quicker than between the wars. The other European countries simply have been moving faster and accomplishing more. From 1966 to 1976, for example, average annual British growth was 1.8 per cent. In West Germany, the figure was 3.4 per cent, in Italy 4 per cent, and in France 4.9 per cent. Over the years, this has made an increasingly—and painfully—evident difference.

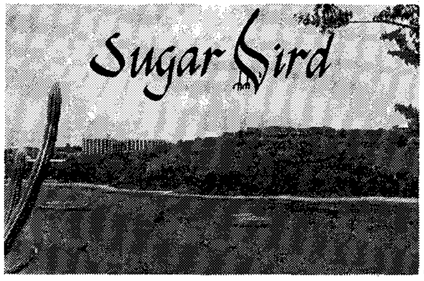
An argument can be made that Britain's economic problems, whatever they may be, are solvable. Indeed, since the war Germans, French, Italians, Greeks, Belgians, Poles, and Dutch have all surmounted worse material problems—industrial and economic—than the British have ever faced. It seems to follow, then, that the British experience is a political, or even a moral, problem—a failure of will. The British have clearly suffered a failure to articulate and act upon a coherent and relevant national program. If this is the truth, then something more needs to be said: We Americans may be Britain's worst friends, and the fact that we and the British speak the same language and possess the same cultural origins has made a damaging contribution to this British failure.

American friendship has been damaging because it encouraged British leaders to believe that an external solution existed to the problems faced by their country. That external solution was association with the powerful and ascendant United States—a "special relationship," as we and they both have come to call it. This association has been described by Harold Macmillan as playing Greece to America's Rome, or has been framed in terms of English-Speaking Union or Atlantic Alliance. The British have sought a privileged role as our special ally, thus perpetuating for themselves a world role only slightly reduced from what it was before. The British believed from the start of this century that they could be the first and favored ally of the new Rome, interpreting the raw Romans to the world, and the subtle world to Rome. Thus, when Prime Minister Callaghan and President Carter met one another for the first time, in March, in Washington, Mr. Callaghan quickly said of Mr. Carter, "We can be an interpreter to him and give a second view. That's the role I undertook."

IT is not really clear why the British chose this role, honorable in conception but so quickly slipping into sycophancy. The American people, at least until the nineteen-forties, did not particularly like the British. We had been at war with them twice, and on the brink of war at least two other



"The whole country is on the cusp of frozen yogurt."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times. Yet the British rejected every alternative. They could have had the leadership of Europe in 1945 for the asking. They did not want it. In his "The Last European War," John Lukacs writes that not only did the British incarnate the cause of the war against Nazism from the start but no one, "the exile governments in London, the resistance groups across the Continent, indeed, no one who opposed Hitler, doubted that Britain would be a great power after the defeat of Germany, that she would play a great role in the affairs of Europe . . . even Stalin believed this." The British were the ones who did not believe in an independent destiny. Their policy of alliance with us, and of subordination of their interests to ours when the two conflicted, had undoubted practical justifications in the Second World War. But the impulse to abdicate to us seems to have antedated not only the nineteen-forties but even the First World War. Élie Halévy, in his monumental "History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century," argues that it came as a result of the Spanish-American War's impact on British popular feeling. The government and the Tory Party were hostile to the American attack upon Spanish power in Cuba and the Philippines, as were all the continental European great powers. But popular opinion in Britain, and especially nonconformist Protestant opinion, firmly backed the United States in what was seen as a crusade by a Protestant and progressive force against supposed Spanish superstition and oppression. Popular feeling compelled Britain to align itself against the continental states, and afterward, says Halévy, the British government and press never "departed from the attitude, now definitely adopted, of deliberately courting the friendship of the American government and people."

Yet one looks for something more subtle than a mobilization of Protestant bigotry as reason for this changed national outlook. Consider that in 1877, when the young Cecil Rhodes, already wealthy from the South African diamond fields, wrote his first will, he wanted a secret society established to bring America back under the British crown. His object (according to the 1911 edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica) was "nothing less than the governance of the world by the British race." Two decades later, in his last will, establishing the Rhodes Scholarships, he wrote that he sought to promote understanding among the great powers so as to "render war impossi-

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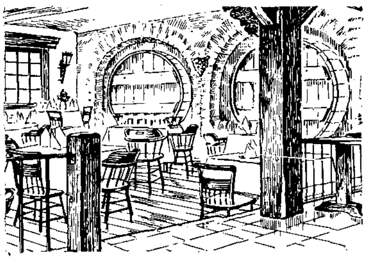
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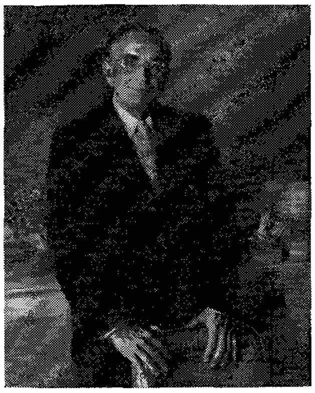
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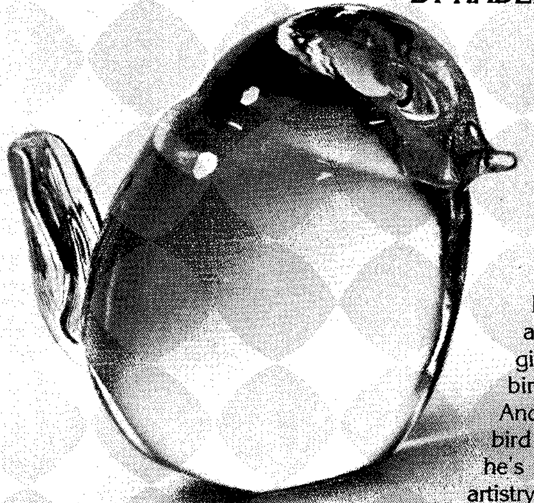
ble," and thus he offered Oxford scholarships to Germans. Americans were offered the scholarships so they might acquire "an attachment to the country from which they have sprung, but without, I hope, withdrawing them or their sympathies from the land of their adoption or birth." Thus the arch-imperialist.

What was happening during the quarter century between 1875 and 1900? The Boer War was in progress from 1899 to 1902, dividing opinion in Britain in a way not wholly unlike the division we experienced over Vietnam. Kitchener's victory at Omdurman and the subsequent extension of Anglo-Egyptian control to the Sudan took place in 1898. Nonetheless, imperialism had certainly passed its historical peak, and with it the unquestioned conviction in Britain that the British race was destined by God to rule the better part of the world in the world's own best interests. Max Beloff, in his history of the "liberal Empire," identifies this as the period of "the weary titan." But there is suggestive evidence of another kind of fatigue—or doubt—at the end of the century. Raffles, the "gentleman cracksman," was a figure of the popular fiction of the time; the first volume of the stories appeared in 1899. Contrary to what most people today assume, Raffles was actually a traitor to his social and moral origins. He had deliberately given up being a "gentleman." A public-school man, he was nonetheless a thief, who betrayed the confidences of friends and class not for ideological reasons or out of political motivations, or to right injustices or to give to the poor, but because he liked excitement, money, and leisure. The stories make no bones about this. Raffles might be called the Philby of his day, the proto-Philby. The stories were immensely popular.

It is difficult to adduce a satisfactory explanation or even provide comprehensive evidence for the kind of change I am describing. One simply states what seems to be true: that Britain, for whatever reason or reasons, passed a certain peak of self-confidence and self-assurance during the late nineteenth century. Moral subversives, such as Raffles, were now admitted and admired. The old missionary confidence was undermined. People stopped believing in a British right to dominate and educate others. T. E. Lawrence, a few years later, in wartime Arabia, was not an imperial romantic but a modern one. He was helping the Arabs make their "own" revolution, and he tortured himself afterward with the fear



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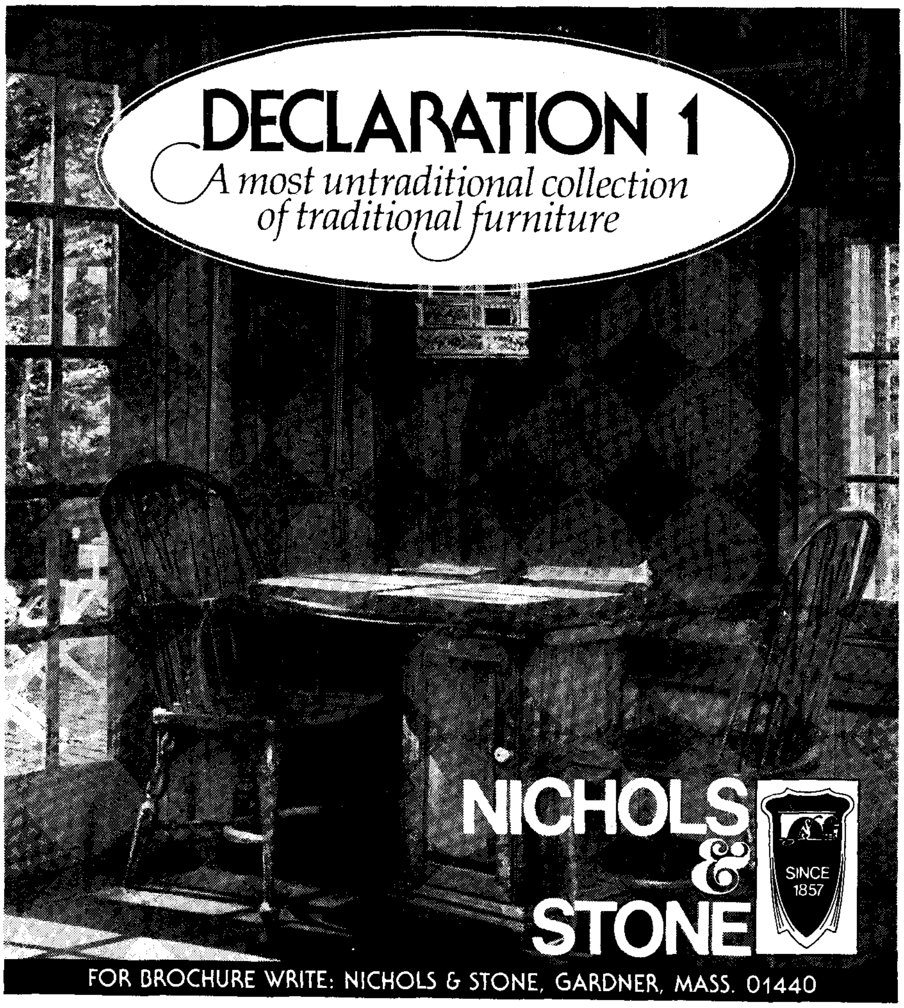

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that British and French political interests had compromised the outcome.

By 1914, at the start of the First World War, a sense of passage, of loss, existed in Britain that was only to be confirmed by the calamitous social and human losses that were beginning to be inflicted upon the whole of European civilization across the Channel. D. H. Lawrence, no Tory romantic to mourn the loss of rural England or of Empire, nonetheless wrote, "When I drive across this country, with autumn falling and rustling to pieces, I am so sad, for my country, for this great wave of civilization, 2,000 years, which is now collapsing, that it is hard to live. So much beauty and pathos of old things passing away and no new things coming: this house—it is England—my God, it breaks my soul—their England." There is something anomalous about this sense of a disintegrating civilization and a lost generation, as if the war were really gratifying a terrible anticipation. T. C. Worsley, the critic, writes of a seeming death wish evident in Rupert Brooke, who said in a letter shortly before he died, "I really think that large numbers of people don't want to die . . . which is odd. . . . I've never been quite so happy in my life." Worsley argues that this impulse was at the source of that exaltation in Brooke's poems which made him a national hero, thanking the God who had "matched them with this hour."

The explanation of the lost generation of 1914-18 can even today be heard cited as an explanation for Britain's need to depend upon "young" America. Yet Britain did not lose a generation. In the First World War, Britain suffered approximately a million killed and missing, the equivalent of 2.4 per cent of the population. Manifestly, that was a ghastly shock to the society. But Germany suffered more than two and a half million men killed, dead of disease, or missing in the war. That was nearly five per cent of the German population. What is more, the Germans were defeated, and saw the Wilhelmian state and economy collapse. France suffered fatalities amounting to 3.4 per cent of the population, and the worst of the war was fought on French soil. It was calculated that in the first year of the war a French soldier had one chance in three of being killed and virtually no chance at all of escaping without a wound. Russia lost about twice as many men as Britain in the period between 1914 and the peace arranged at Brest-Litovsk in March, 1918. All of these nations were traumatized by their

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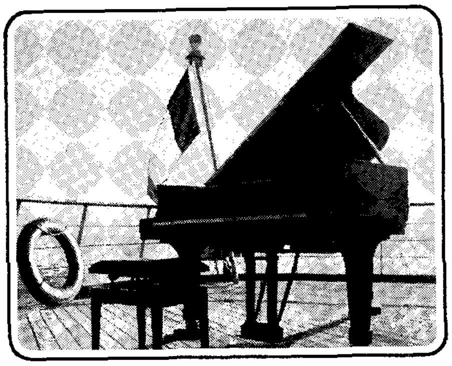
losses. France spent the nineteen-thirties in a coma, the nineteen-forties broken and shamed, but, having touched bottom, recovered dynamism and confidence in the nineteen-fifties and sixties. The Russian and German reactions after 1918 were politically frenzied, leading up to the Second World War, in which those two nations again lost most. In the Second World War, it is estimated, Russia lost something like twenty million dead from all causes. Germany had more than four million dead and more than eight and a half million wounded. Britain's fatalities in the Second World War were three hundred and sixty thousand. Yet today it is Britain that is commonly understood to be the national casualty; Germany and Russia are bustling and energetic.

Perhaps the First World War was especially traumatic for Britain's leadership because so many of the casualties were young men of education and promise. The first year of the war was a catastrophe for the social and professional élites of Britain. The sons of the landed and professional families of the country rushed from public schools to the front in an intoxication of patriotism, and for a time it seemed that all of them were being wounded or killed. Those who survived, or followed, felt guilty at being alive. Even as sensible a man as George Orwell, who was fifteen the year the First World War ended, said afterward that his "generation must be marked for ever by the humiliation of not having taken part." The experience of the war was eloquently articulated by the survivors Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves, Henry Williamson, and David Jones, and by the non-survivors Brooke and Wilfred Owen. (Isaac Rosenberg, the East End Jew and maladroit private soldier, is only now gaining wide appreciation; he did not fit the romantic stereotype.) Britain did not impose conscription until 1916, and a consequence of this was that the ardent went first. The national memory was of all the best shockingly and suddenly gone. The Armistice, wrote Graves, "sent me out walking alone along the dyke above the marshes of Rhuddlan . . . cursing and sobbing and thinking of the dead."

A quarter century later, British strategy and generalship throughout the Second World War displayed the most extreme caution about casualties—a hoarding of manpower and an avoidance, as far as was possible, of really large-scale battle. There were to be no more Sommes, no more Passchendaeles. To bring the United States into the war and build up an overwhelming superiority against the Germans before any imaginable counterattack upon the European continent was Churchill's fundamental policy from the start. That policy was rational, inevitable. But the question to be asked is whether the price that was paid, in subordination to our leadership, was not, in the end, too much.

THE British choice of permanent American alliance was to a degree perverse from the very start. We and the British have in the past been anything but friendly toward each other. At the end of the nineteenth century, we nearly went to war over Britain's dispute with Venezuela about the Guiana frontier. Britain had supported the Confederacy in 1862, hoping to see the United States dismembered. Our alliance with Britain in the two World Wars had many strains, and between the wars there was a good deal of bitterness in this country against Britain. After Versailles, when Wilson had failed and the country was angrily drawing back from its European involvement, it was suggested that we had been pulled into the war by British trickery. Unquestionably, the British had brilliantly manipulated American public opinion. Their interception and handling of the Zimmermann telegram had reversed Wilson's peace policy and precipitated the American intervention. The telegram contained a clumsy German proposal for a Mexican alliance in the event that the United States entered the European war. The British got hold of it, and used it to maximum effect on American public opinion. There was also the affair of the Lusitania, the great Cunard liner torpedoed by a U-boat in 1915, with nearly twelve hundred civilian passengers lost, Americans among them. The Germans at the time insisted that the vessel was actually a covertly armed merchantman carrying munitions, and today there is evidence that this was true. Certainly its loss was not without compensating advantage to Britain, since that, too, helped impel the United States toward war.

In the nineteen-twenties and thirties, the British were regarded with distinct distrust by numbers of Americans, notably among the urban Irish and among the German Catholics of the Midwest. To be a "Dutchman"—a German—in the Midwest was a great deal better than to be an Englishman, who was ordinarily stereotyped as imperialist, Cockney, or a playboy like the Prince of Wales. This, after all, was about the time when Chicago's Mayor



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Big Bill Thompson said that if the King of England came to Chicago he'd punch him in the nose. California's recent governor Ronald Reagan, even with an Irish surname, chose to begin his career as a sports broadcaster in Iowa under the name Dutch Reagan. The city Irish both in the Midwest and in the East hated the English, having fresh memories of the Black and Tans and the Troubles, as well as inherited memories of Cromwell and famine. In 1939, the British Ambassador reported from Washington to the Foreign Secretary that Americans "have been taught that they were tricked into the last war partly by Wall Street finance and partly by British and French propaganda," and that "it is obviously going to take a long time to reëducate 130 million people into a truer perspective." When the right-wing member of Congress Martin Dies argued against American help for Britain and France in 1939, he conceded that their forms of government "are far more in accord with those of the United States than are those of Germany and Italy" but added that "it is also true that London and Paris control the two largest empires in the world today." Norman Thomas, the patrician Socialist leader, was also against American involvement, because he, too, saw the war as an imperialists' war. Senator Robert M. La Follette, David Dellinger, Oswald Garrison Villard, the Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., the Reverend Harry Emerson Fosdick, Quincy Howe, and Chester Bowles were among the liberals at one or another time connected with the isolationist or anti-interventionist movements. Bruce Bliven, editor of *The New Republic*, wrote in 1938 that he could remember once before, in the days before April, 1917, "when a country that did not want to go to war was tricked and bullied and persuaded into doing so," adding, "I feel . . . that I have seen it all before. This is where I came in." Isolationism obviously derived from much more than a distrust of London and Paris, and of their imperialisms. But popular hostility toward Britain and British imperialism was a major factor in American life of that time.

THE real "special relationship" was a product of the Second World War, and especially of the war's last year or two in Europe and the aftermath. From the beginning, we obviously got on more easily with the British, with whom we could speak, than with the Russians, Kuomintang Chinese, or the Free French. Of course, there was also a sense in which our

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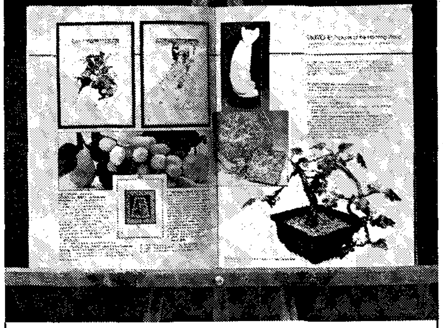

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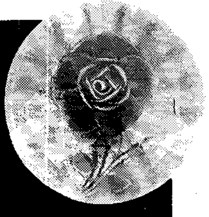

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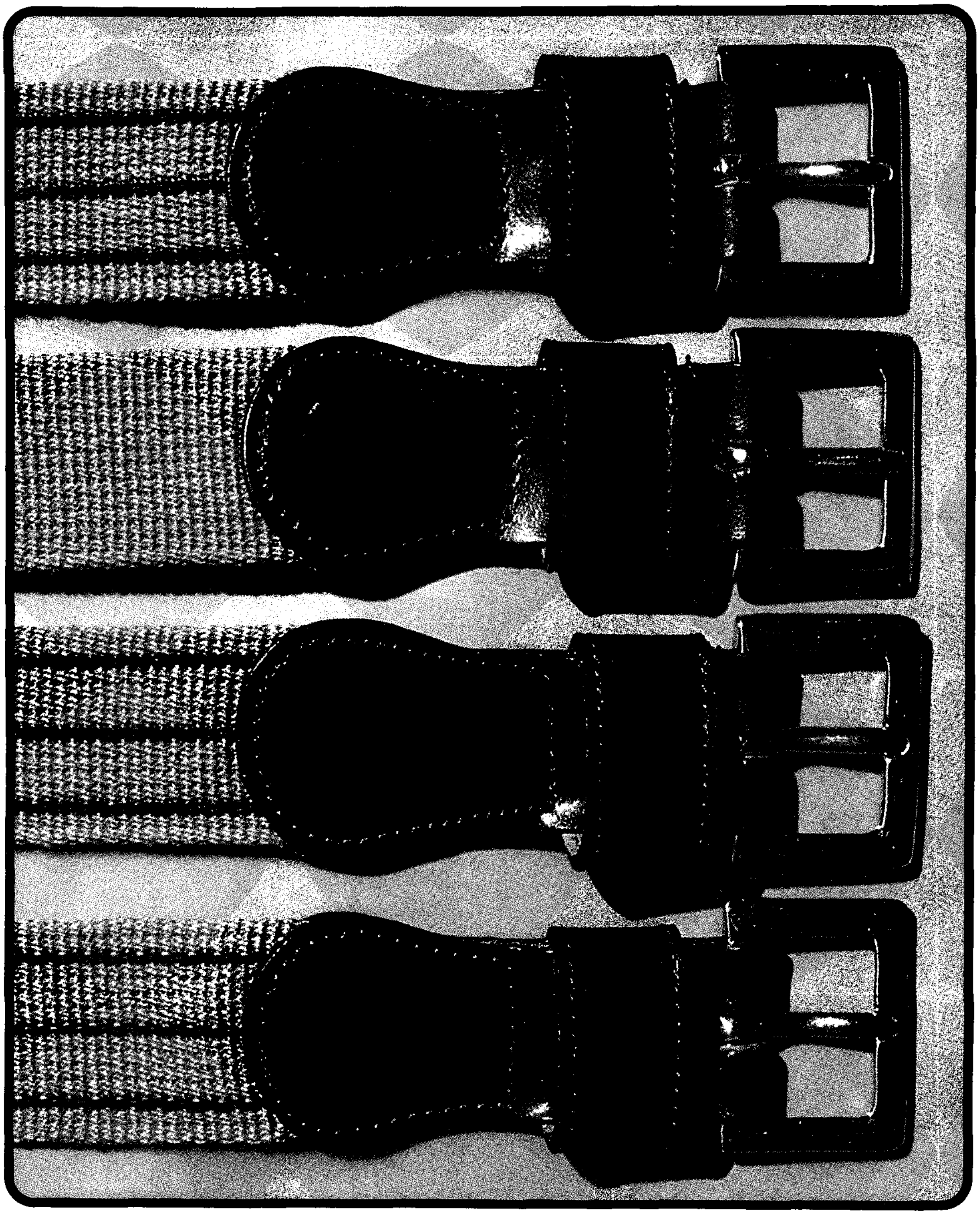

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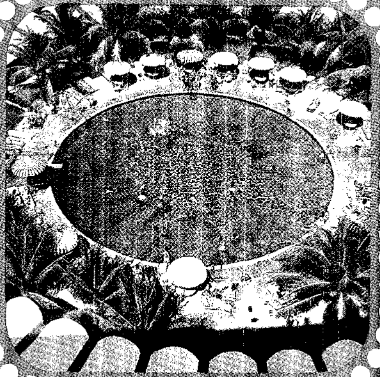

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more exotic allies were more attractive: they seemed more susceptible to our guidance and patronage. The Russians certainly did not do as we said, but they desperately needed our shipments of supplies, and in the United States a certain belief existed that we could eventually sway Stalin's policies, and that a degree of natural kinship existed between the two "young"—and avowedly anti-imperialist—powers, as against the imperialist British, and against Churchill's cold-blooded views on the inevitability of spheres of influence in the postwar world. China, fourth of the "Big Four," was thought a particularly attractive subject for postwar American tutelage. "I have told Chiang to be ready to take over [French Indo-China] at the end of the war," Roosevelt told a visitor in 1944. "The French have forfeited their right to it by neglect." Thus could problems be settled in Asia.

But General Eisenhower, at his London headquarters, enforced an "Atlantic" standard of conduct. He insisted that, whatever uniform they wore, members of his combined staff were soldiers in a single enterprise. His attitude contributed to the British belief that something like this could be continued after the war; indeed, that is what occurred as long as Eisenhower was President, and when Harold Macmillan charmed Kennedy and Lord Harlech occupied Britain's Washington embassy. Yet even under Kennedy, in the centers of bureaucratic power in Washington, and especially at the Pentagon, the Germans were taken more seriously than the British. They had ten divisions on the ground, and they did what they were told. The British had two divisions in their Rhine Army. Harold Macmillan wrote in 1961, "I have always thought about American Presidents that the great thing is to get them to do what we want." But this is exactly the opposite of what really had happened by 1961. It was the British who did what we wanted. In all of the postwar years, they defied us only once—at Suez, and then only briefly. The Israelis and the French would have gone on with the invasion of Suez despite American anger, but the British backed down.

Even when wartime and initial postwar coöperation were at a peak, the old American dislike of Britain was not hard to find. Edmund Wilson was no American xenophobe, no romantic populist, but on a London visit just after the war he wrote of rediscovering those "basic English qualities, with which, after nearly two hundred years, Americans have to reckon again: the passion

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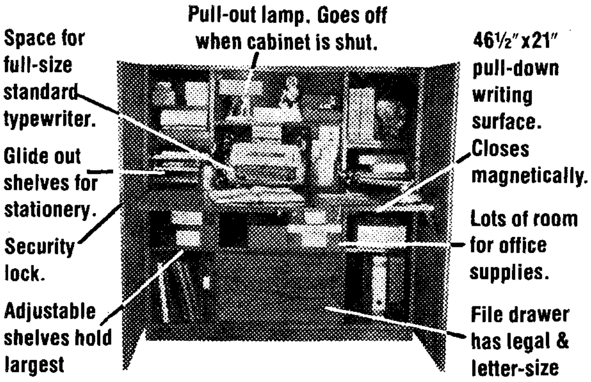
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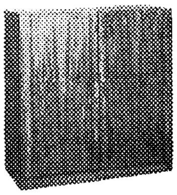

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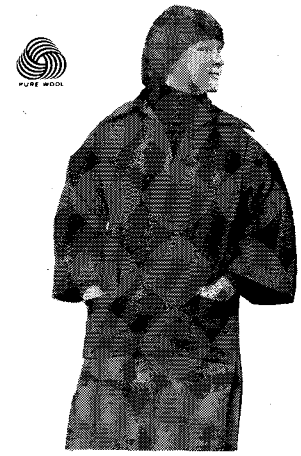

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for social privilege, the rapacious appetite for property, the egoism that damns one's neighbor, the dependence on inherited advantages, and the almost equally deep-fibred instinct, often not deliberate or conscious, to make all these appear forms of virtue." It is true that Wilson liked neither the French nor the Italians any better than the English. But this is precisely the point. The attempt of the British to bind themselves to us required that we make an exception of them. It presupposed that in their case a fundamental amendment would occur in the traditional American belief that the American relationship with Europe was one of superiority and tutelage—America constituting a "new order" among mankind, which the Europeans should emulate but could not equal. During the war, we had gratefully appreciated Londoners of the Blitz, the Britain of the Battle of Britain, of Commandos, desert rats, Atlantic convoys. We nonetheless ended the war still seeing Britain as the imperial power, the society of class and unearned privilege.

Britain forty years ago was, in the world's eyes as well as in American eyes, an international power of the first rank. Thirty years ago, it was still seen by all to be a leading power in the great alliance, victor over totalitarianism, ready to reorder world affairs. In the years that followed, Britain seemed steadily to diminish—a dwindling figure in a seemingly shrunken Europe. Louis Heren, an editor of the *Times* of London, a man decidedly friendly to us, has written of this period, "The United States became more than the first among equals. Generally speaking, it saw the European allies as so many Germanic tribes guarding the eastern glacis of the American empire. Levies were confidently expected to be sent to fight elsewhere, in Korea and even Vietnam. . . . For almost a generation [the Americans] had grown accustomed to political as well as economic and military power, and they tended to regard Europeans as once Indians and Africans were regarded by their European colonial masters."

The British, at least, invited such treatment. To this day, it is difficult to adequately explain why. What they were asking was really quite extraordinary. We Americans were to take them into the family. It has been suggested that this is more than a metaphor. The politically active British professional class and the aristocracy of the turn of the century made a great many transatlantic marriages. Both Churchill and Macmillan had American mothers. And, of course, we and

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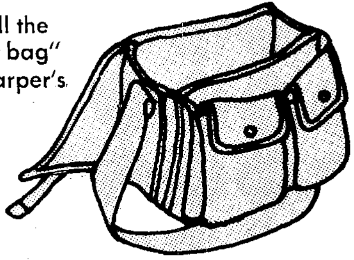

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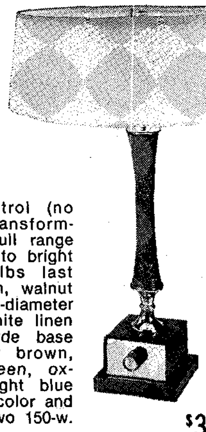

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the British *are* related. There has always been a vitally important intellectual traffic across the Atlantic. America does derive its legal institutions and fundamental political assumptions from Britain. But the actual relationship between the two countries has been one of frequent dislikes and rivalries, many of them derived precisely from what we have in common. There have never been grounds for an expectation by the British that we would alter our own political course out of an acknowledged obligation to them; the evidence of two hundred years is quite the opposite. But even if there were, what could we really have done for them? What is it they really wanted? What responsibility at home, what truth about themselves, have they needed to evade? As an American, one asks such questions with hesitation, but also in wonder that they need to be asked by an American, and that they have not by now been more insistently asked within Britain.

—WILLIAM PFAFF

•

THE LAST STEP

Once I was a small grain
of fire burning on the rim
of day, and I waited in silence
until the dawn released me
and I climbed into the light.
Here, in the brilliant orchard,
the thick-skinned oranges
doze in winter light,
late roses shred the wind,
and blood rains into
the meadows of winter grass.

I thought I would find my father
and hand in hand we would pace off
a child's life, I thought the air,
crystal around us, would hold
his words until they became
me, never to be forgotten.
I thought the rain was far off
under another sky. I thought
that to become a man I
had only to wait, and the years,
gathering slowly, would take me there.

They took me somewhere else.
The twisted fig tree, the almond,
not yet white-crowned, the slow
tendrils of grape reaching
into the sky are companions
for a time, but nothing goes
the whole way. Not even the snail
smeared to death on a flat rock
or the tiny sparrow fallen from
the nest and flaring the yellow grass.
The last step, like an entrance,
is alone, in darkness, and without song.

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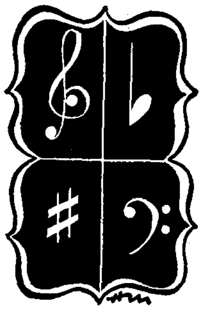
MUSICAL EVENTS

A Composer for Our Time

SIR MICHAEL TIPPETT'S fourth opera, "The Ice Break," an important and beautiful piece, had its first performances, at Covent Garden, in July. It is brief—the three acts last about twenty-two, twenty-five, and twenty-eight minutes—but substantial: a drama in which large events pass in review, and a score so rich in emotional and intellectual resonances that the attentive listener needs the breathing space of the intermissions. Each of Tippett's operas has its starting point in a sudden vision or inspiration—an "idea" for a music-drama around which there then gather related images, musical, dramatic, and literary, from which the work is built. Each of the operas makes the impression of being a "necessary" composition, one that demanded to be written. There was no question of casting around for a suitable new subject: these subjects forced themselves upon the composer, and drove him to find words and music for their expression.

Tippett's first opera, "The Midsummer Marriage" (1955), is the lyrical, exuberant, elaborated setting down of an actual vision: in the composer's words, "I *saw* a stage picture . . . of a wooded hilltop with a temple, where a warm and soft young man was being rebuffed by a cold and hard young woman . . . to such a degree that the collective, magical archetypes take charge." "King Priam" (1962) grew from contemplation of Homer's great scene in which Priam visits Achilles in his tent. In "The Knot Garden" (1970), seven characters tread an emotional maze, and a series of encounters leads to self-discovery and self-understanding; the last act of "Figaro," Virginia Woolf's "Between the Acts," and, most evidently, the encounters on Prospero's enchanted isle underlie the action. Allusiveness is an essential part of Tippett's technique. It is both literary (Aristotle, Stefan George, and Yeats jostle in a key passage, the "messenger's speech," of "King Priam;" Shakespeare, Jung, and Paul Valéry join a parallel passage of "The Ice Break") and musical (Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is prominently quoted in Tippett's Third; a Schubert song has an important part in "The Knot Garden"). Other great minds play upon his. He brings things together. He has written of "the feeling a creative artist has when he knows he has become the instrument of some collective experience—or, as Wagner puts it, that a Myth is coming once more to life," and of his belief that "somewhere or other, in books, in pictures, in dreams, in real situations, everything is sooner or later to be found which *belongs* for all details of the work."



"The Ice Break," which Tippett began to compose in 1973, had its start in reflection on two different kinds of violence—the imprisonment of free thought in Russia and the brutality of race riots. Two musical images began to sound in his mind, and he describes them in the preface to the libretto:

> In the music there are two archetypal sounds; one related to the frightening but exhilarating sound of the ice breaking on the great northern rivers in the spring; the other related to the exciting or terrifying sound of the slogan-shouting crowds, which can lift you on their shoulders in triumph or stamp you to death.

A scene took shape: an American airport at which there are arriving, by the same flight, as-it-were Solzhenitsyn (in the opera Lev, whose name means "lion") and as-it-were Muhammad Ali (in the opera Olympion, "a black champion"). The plot is schematic and shapely. There are three couples: Lev and his wife, Nadia ("hope"), who emigrated to America twenty years earlier, with their infant son, when Lev went to a prison camp; Yuri, that son, who has grown up sullen, rebellious, and difficult, and his shallow, high-spirited white girlfriend Gayle, "around for kicks;" Olympion, who mouths simple slogans like "I'm beautiful: I'm black . . . I am the greatest," and his girlfriend Hannah ("grace"), a black nurse, the heroine of the piece, in whose kindly hands, generous soul, and instinctive compassion for all kinds of suffering the composer discerns a limited chance for healing some of the world's divisions. The divisions shown in the opera are threefold: between political systems, between generations, and between races of different colors. A seventh character, Luke (named for "the beloved physician"), a young doctor, remains shadowy both as a person and as a symbol; perhaps he represents the technical means man has for making whole what has not been smashed beyond repair.

There are three crowd scenes, contrasted in tone, unified in their condemnation of mindless, stereotyped mass emotion: in Act I a chorus of welcome for Olympion, during which Gayle throws herself at him ("I make amends. . . . Come kiss me now, black beauty") and is contemptuously spurned; in Act II a white-against-black confrontation in which Olympion and Gayle are killed and Yuri is gravely injured; in Act III a group "trip," which is Tippett's ironical presentation of any attempt to answer life's difficult questions by recourse to drugs. But these crowd scenes can shift in the course of a measure to intimate dialogues between the principals, in intimate surroundings, and then shift back again. One moment, the listener is in the thick of mob activity; the next, within walls and within the minds of those reflecting on the world outside. Tippett asks much of his interpreters; at Covent Garden, by Sam Wanamaker's direction, Ralph Koltai's décor, Walter Raines's choreography, and David Hersey's lighting he was faithfully and imaginatively served. It was one of the most brilliant presentations of a difficult new opera I have seen. The stage images were found to match the swift contrasts and sudden simultaneities of the music.

At the start of Act III, Nadia is dying. At her bedside, Lev is reading the last chapter of "Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre"—the passage about a youth hurtling toward destruction. He asks bitterly, "Why did I leave that other country? What have I come here for? To watch my wife's death and my son's hatred?" Hannah seeks to console him, and reflects, "Struggle is always, Is here, Ev'rywhere in this vast world of ghettos." Nadia dies, recalling her Russian childhood and the excitement of the spring ice break; but hope does not die with her. At the end, the plaster encasing Yuri's shattered limbs is broken, and he steps out "reborn." There is an echo of the Prodigal Son in a simple musically eloquent exchange of "Father!" "Son!" The three survivors—Hannah, Yuri, Lev, one from each couple—are reconciled. Lev, who is naturally given to quotation (in the prison camp, "poetry upheld me"), repeats, as the final lines of the opera, Wilhelm Meister's joyful exclamation over that other threatened youth, whom he snatched from death, and in whom he recognized his lost son: "Yet you will always be brought forth again, glorious image of God, and likewise be maimed, wounded afresh, from within or without." It is not quite the confident affirmation toward the close of Tippett's early oratorio "A Child of Our Time" (1944): "Here is no final grieving, but an abiding hope. The moving waters renew the earth. It is spring." His thought and his music have grown darker, but there remains at least "the momentary vision of a possibility." "Deep within me," he said a few years ago, "I know that part of the artist's job is to renew our sense of the comely and the beautiful. To create a dream." That was in a television talk (later reprinted), "Poets in a Barren Age." He also said:

> I have been writing music for forty years. During those years there have been huge and world-shattering events in which I have inevitably been caught up. Whether society has felt music valuable or needful I have gone on writing because I must. And I know that my true function within a society that embraces all of us is to continue an age-old tradition ... to create images from the depths of the imagination and to give them form.... Images of the past, shapes of the future. Images of vigour for a decadent period, images of calm for one too violent. Images of reconciliation for worlds torn by division. And, in an age of mediocrity and shattered dreams, images of abounding, generous, exuberant beauty.

"The Midsummer Marriage" was done in London in August—at a concert performance, during the Proms. (It was the Welsh National Opera production, which I mentioned in these columns last year. Since then it has been played to enthusiastic audiences up and down Britain, and it came to the Proms in a joyfully secure, youthfully accomplished performance.) That opera holds Tippett's richest store of abundant, generous, exuberant imagery. The vocal lines leap and sing, the rhythms dance, and the orchestra is filled with fresh colors. The music seems at once new-mint—pouring forth in a shining stream of spontaneous invention—and inevitable, as if it had existed, waiting to be sounded, since the earth saw its first spring, nature's renewing round first began, and a boy and girl first fell in love. It is a masterly score. Tippett is not only a poet and visionary but a craftsman. Like a romantic boy, he has retained that power whose loss Wordsworth lamented—of being able to relate experiences so that nothing felt, seen, read, heard, or dreamed need remain absolute. As a mature man, he learned how to harness this power—to command his lines, harmonies, timbres, and forms. There were years of hard wrestling with his

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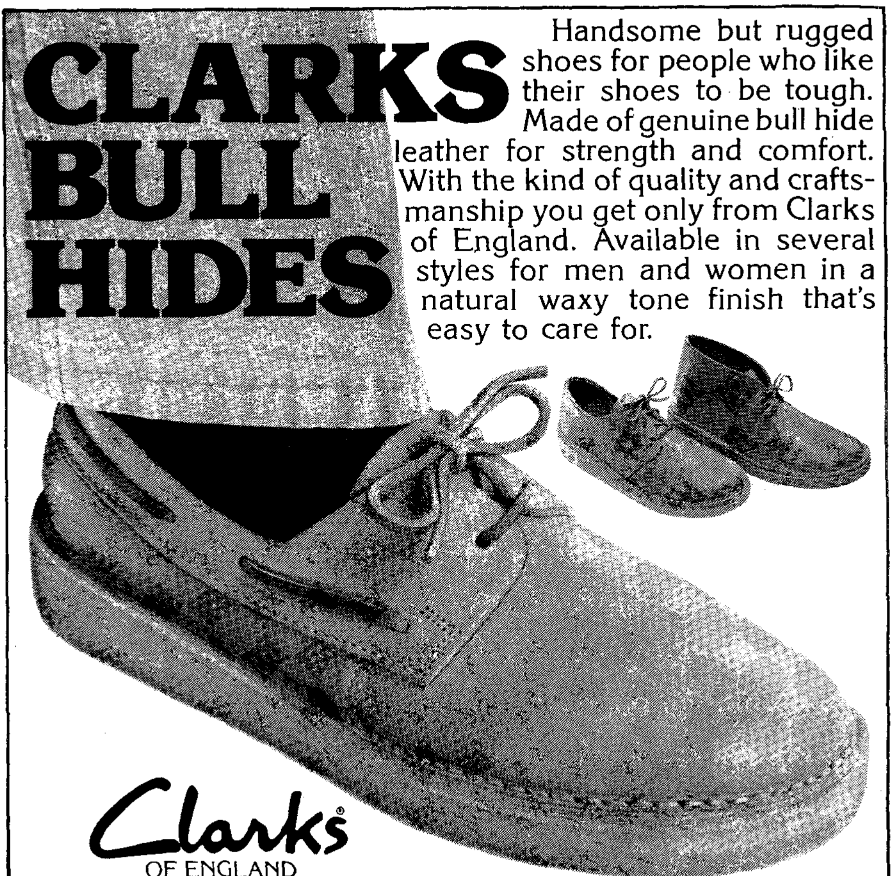
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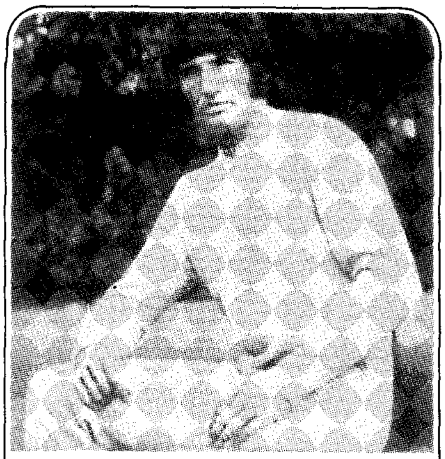

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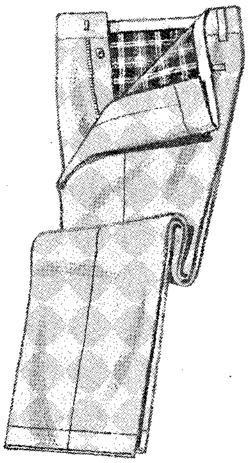

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medium before he attained to eloquence. Sosostris, the visionary soothsayer in "The Midsummer Marriage," like Wagner's Erda, rises from rich dark dreams to the day and—in music of memorable power and beauty—voices a creator's agony and passion ("O bitterness, O bitterness of a Pythia's fate") before proceeding to the clear relation of a vision ("Truth shall shine through me. . . . I speak as a seer"). Her successors—each of Tippett's operas has a "messenger"—are less confident. In the penultimate scene of "King Priam," Hermes comes forward with the warning "Do not imagine that all the secrets of life can be known from a story. O but feel the pity and the terror as Priam dies." Mangus, who, Prospero-like, manipulates much of the action in "The Knot Garden," is driven at last to the rueful admission that "Prospero's a fake." And Astron, the "psychedelic messenger" of "The Ice Break," pronounces just two sayings, of obscure significance: "Dear friends, Take care for the Earth. God will take care of himself" (from a Jung letter), and "Spring come to you at the farthest, In the very end of harvest" (a couplet from the masque in "The Tempest," agriculturally unsound, pointful only when we recall that "The Tempest" was played for the winter betrothal of Princess Elizabeth, James I's daughter, and the Prince Palatine). Hailed by the euphoric, drugged crowd as "Our Saviour Hero," Astron chirpily replies, "Saviour?! Hero?! Me!! You must be joking."

It is a joy to revisit the fresh, enchanted world of "The Midsummer Marriage," where hope is more than a gleam of what might be, where dreams come true. (The stage action shifts between reality and dream; none of the three British productions of the piece has done visual justice to its visions.) It is painful in "The Ice Break" to listen to the confident hymn (to a Methodist tune that the Ku Klux Klan adopted):

> A band of pure Caucasians,
> the noblest of the klan,
> we stand in rank together,
> white woman with white;

to hear Blue Mountain fiddling, square dance, and clarinet jazz breaks perverted into symbols of race hatred; to watch three of the young people, Gayle and Yuri and then Olympion, don tribal hoods and merge with mobs. Hannah stays apart: in a long aria, the lyrical center of the opera, she searches within herself to find some sense amid the violence ("I scrabble for unformed letters That might make a word"). Elsewhere in the city, Lev

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is doing the same, while searching, too, down long corridors of past human suffering that poets have limned. Not for these two—and not for Tippett—the simple shouted slogans or the escapist answers of an Astron. It is inspiring in "The Ice Break" to hear the musical images of calm, reconciliation, and beauty that, in spite of everything, the composer has been able to find. The "ice break" noise itself—fiercely grinding sonorities on lower winds and strings—is violent and terrible but not evil; it holds the promise of spring. The lyrical passages, where the score thins down and lines from a solo instrument may accompany individual reflections, are deeply affecting: they tell of a quest for stillness, for understanding, and for an order not that of crude regimentation. The music is not expansive, except in Hannah's aria. There are few repetitions. The melodies, timbres, and harmonies act directly on a responsive listener. The terse, sure, intricate form of the opera makes it seem in retrospect not so much a series of dramatic actions as a single, complicated vision, piercing and poignant.

"The Ice Break" is dedicated to Colin Davis, who conducted a performance both carefully prepared and passionate. Heather Harper and John Shirley-Quirk, as Nadia and Lev, and Josephine Barstow and Tom McDonnell, as Gayle and Yuri, were admirable—the older couple marvellously "real," convincing and individual in each inflection and gesture, the younger vivid in their (deliberately) more stereotyped roles. Beverly Vaughn, a young mezzo from Columbus, Ohio, made a much acclaimed Covent Garden début as Hannah; she was warm, smooth, and lovable in her tones and in her enactment of the character. The Olympion of Clyde Walker was the only disappointment; he lacked both the physical presence and the sonic panache for the role. The vocal types required could be suggested by an imaginary City Opera cast, drawn from artists who sang there last season: Johanna Meier and Donald Gramm, Gianna Rolandi and David Holloway, Joy Blackett and Benjamin Matthews. (Olympion's role, designated for tenor, is compassable by a high baritone.) Astron's unearthly voice is projected, through loudspeakers, by a combination of mezzo and countertenor, singing mainly in unison but with some touches of heterophony; his presence is indicated by a glittering cluster of laser beams.

No American performance of "The Ice Break," at the City Opera or elsewhere, has been announced. Interna-

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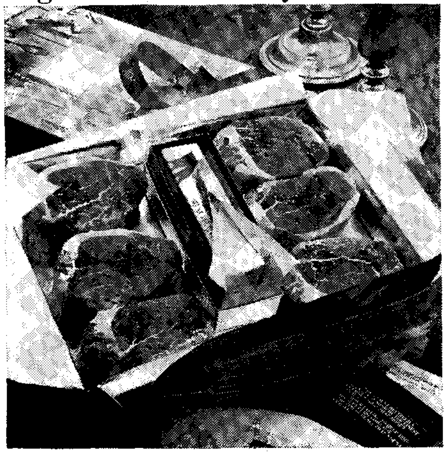

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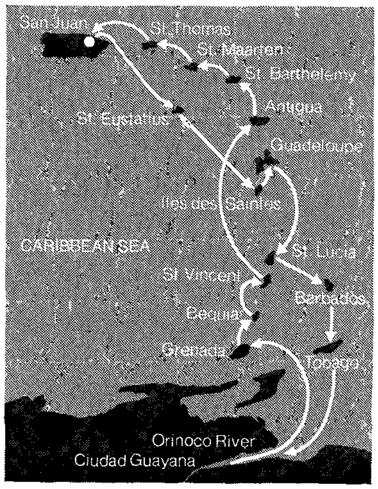

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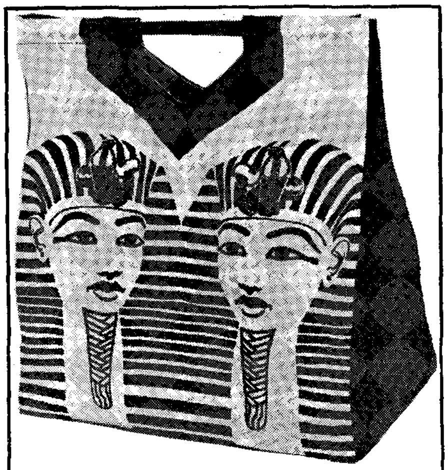

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tionally, Tippett's operas have circulated mainly on records. (There are Philips albums of "The Midsummer Marriage" and "The Knot Garden.") "The Midsummer Marriage" and "King Priam" have had a single German production each; "The Knot Garden" was done by the Northwestern University Opera Theatre in 1974. In America his music is beginning to be played more often. Solti and the Chicago Symphony will give the first performances of the Fourth Symphony in October, and will bring it to Carnegie Hall a month later. The Minnesota Opera is to produce "The Knot Garden" in February. Across the country, fourteen performances of "A Child of Our Time" are billed for this season. When "The Ice Break" does reach America, the excursions into American slang are likely to sound off-key and awkward ("What's bugging you man? Cool and jivey once; Now, touchy and tight"). But Tippett's English is frequently off-key and awkward, too. As a poet, he allows himself a verbal recklessness and promiscuity of allusion at odds with the precision of his notes. For example, over Gayle's body Luke exclaims, "Gayle, bonny Gayle, gone out with the wind." The echoes of Ernest Dowson, Margaret Mitchell, and the Skye Boat Song are inappropriate. Tippett's texts have been often attacked, sometimes defended. After "The Ice Break," the *New Statesman's* critic wrote of "the familiar drone of the composer's high-flown libretto trying so hard to get down to earth that it crash-lands in flat and flagrant cliché;" but the *Spectator's* found the libretto "faultless." Tippett himself describes his libretto writing as "an assemblage of metaphors." Over the years, at repeated hearings of his operas, I have come to accept his often infelicitous diction as an apparently inevitable part of his utterance. Although one may flinch at verbal details, the big dramatic metaphors work. And the awkwardness is a small price to pay for music so communicative, so honest, and so stirring. —ANDREW PORTER

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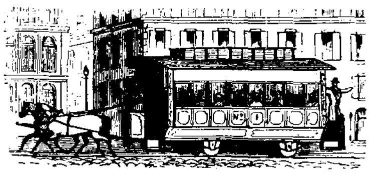

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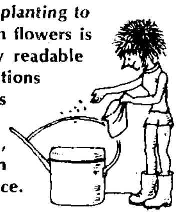

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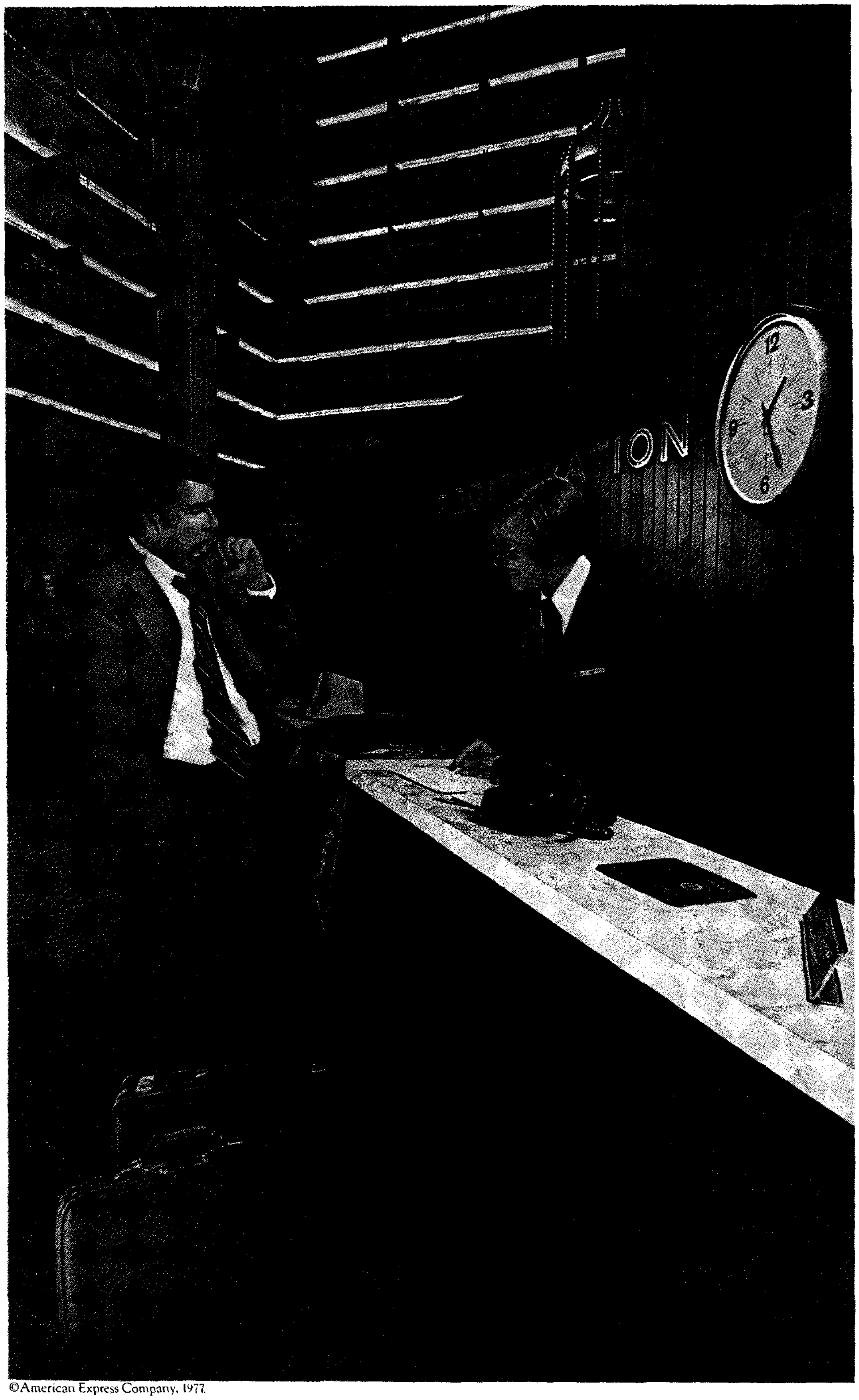

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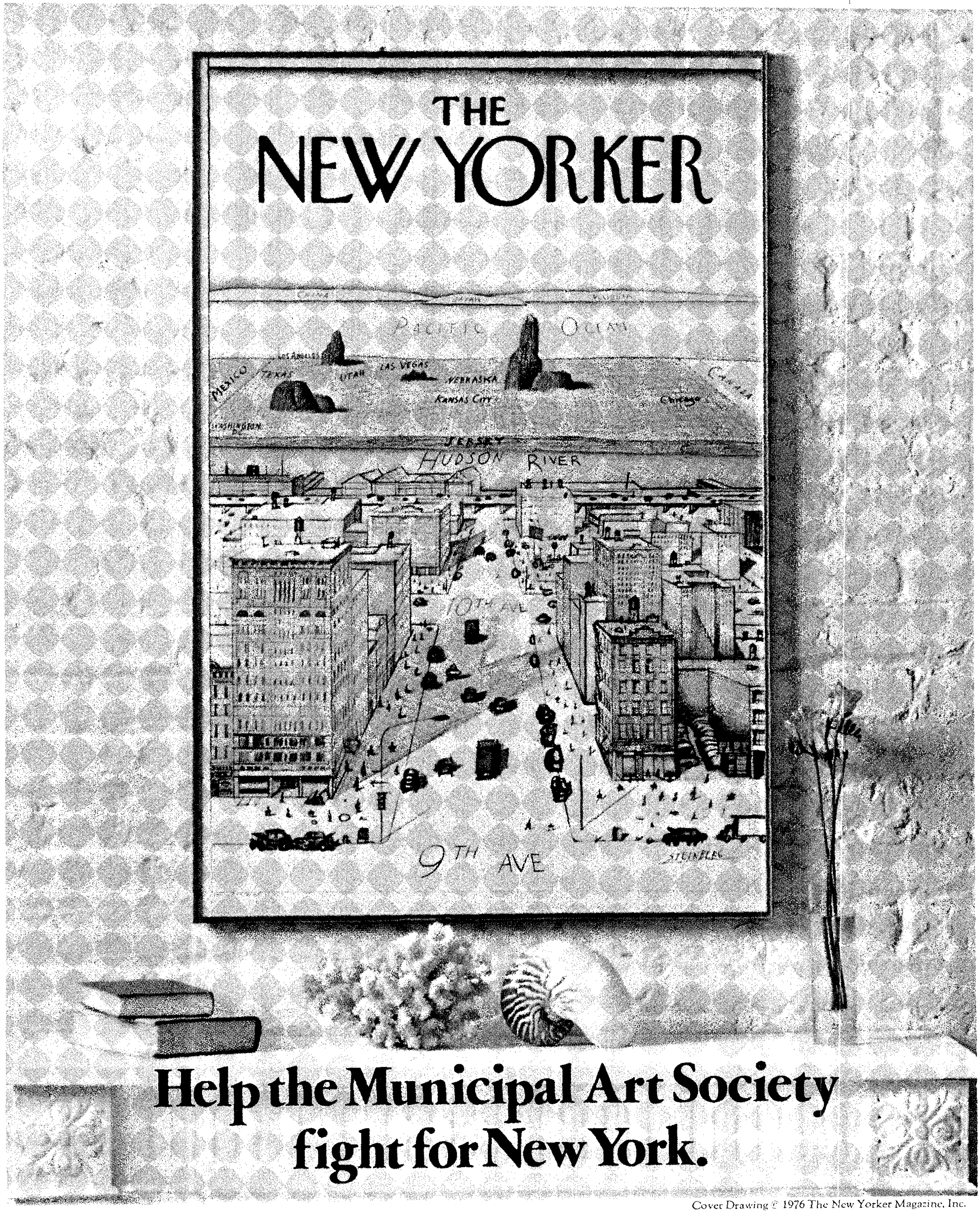
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THE RACE TRACK

Meadowlands Opening

NEW YORK horseplayers can go racing six nights a week from now on. Meadowlands, the track in the Hackensack Meadows in East Rutherford, began its thoroughbreds meeting, which will end on New Year's Eve, the evening after Labor Day. A crowd of 25,158 bet $2,480,393 in the tote. It was hardly the grand opening expected; no doubt remembering the crush of more than forty thousand when the trots opened at Meadowlands a year ago, many people stayed away. Those who came saw nine lively races in comfort. Attendance two nights later was 20,847. I should say that the meeting has clicked. As you probably know, Meadowlands is part of the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority, a complex that includes the Giants' football stadium. The grandstand and clubhouse are well arranged and well appointed. Diogenes Checkpoints, the old first-nighter, says he had never been to a racecourse before that looked so out-of-the-bandbox new. The track is a one-mile oval, and the homestretch is a mere nine hundred and ninety feet—three-sixteenths of a mile. It is a fast track—ordinary horses run the first quarter mile of a race in around twenty-two seconds—because it was made for trotters and pacers, which must have hard footing. There is topsoil on it, to cushion the impact of the hooves of thoroughbreds, who run hard. Apparently, there's not enough of it, however: the first race on opening night, for Jersey-breds, at six furlongs, was won by Play the Palace, and the time by quarters was a fast 0:22⅕, 0:44⅘, 1:10⅘. The main race of the evening, the $109,900 Paterson Handicap, at nine furlongs, in which Rushing Man led all the way, was run in 0:22⅘, 0:45⅖, 1:09, 1:33⅕, 1:46⅗. The management is going to hear complaints from horsemen, if it hasn't already.

It is too soon to say how much Meadowlands will affect attendance and betting at Belmont and Aqueduct. It's nearer Manhattan, it will get horses from the big stables, and the leading jockeys always go big in Jersey. Admission to the grandstand is $1.75 and to the clubhouse $3. (At Belmont and Aqueduct, it is $2 and $3.50.) Meadowlands will also affect business at Roosevelt and Yonkers raceways, and OTB will scream for a whack at the handle. It may be the forerunner of new race tracks of steel, concrete, and glass, with not a tree in sight or a blade of grass underfoot. Oh, well.

BELMONT PARK offered its 42,118 patrons a double feature on Labor Day—the Jerome Handicap and the Astarita Stakes—and a double disqualification in the Jerome for good measure. To the Quick, Affiliate, and Broadway Forli came down to the wire necks apart in the hundred-and-eighth running of the mile for three-year-olds, and there was a murmur of surprise from the stand, for To the Quick was 30–1 in the betting. Presently, the "Inquiry" sign flashed on the board, and the stewards began hearing reports from patrol judges and claims of foul from jockeys. As the ten runners had come out of the starting gate, To the Quick, in the middle of the bunch, had swerved sharply to the right; at the same moment, Affiliate, in the next-to-outside post position, had swerved to the left. Several horses had been crowded, among them Broadway Forli. After the inquiry, Broadway Forli was placed first, with To the Quick and Affiliate behind him. To me, the surprise of the race was Silver Series, winner of the Hawthorne, Ohio, and American Derbies, and a bangup third in the Travers. He escaped the crowding, but he never seemed to be able to get going, and finished sixth.

In the Astarita, Sherry Peppers didn't have the zip she had had in the Spinaway, and Lakeville Miss, whom she'd beaten so easily at Saratoga, raced her down in the stretch to win by nearly a length.

Harbor View Farm's Affirmed beat Calumet's Alydar by a nose in the Futurity last Saturday. Looking over the charts of other races, I'd say that it was the thriller of the week. Only five two-year-olds—the smallest field in years—went to the post for the eighty-eighth running of the classic, and it was a dramatic struggle between Affirmed and Alydar from beginning to end of the seven furlongs over a muddy track. Nasty and Bold finished third, lengths behind them. The time of 1:21⅗ was unusually fast, considering the footing. It was the sixth victory in seven starts for Affirmed, a chestnut colt by Exclusive Native out of Won't Tell You,

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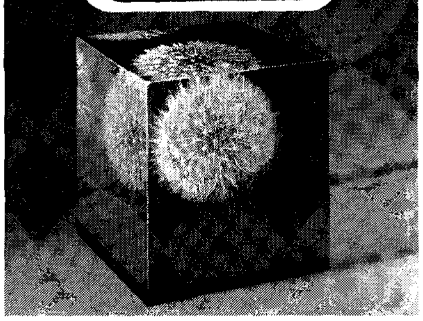

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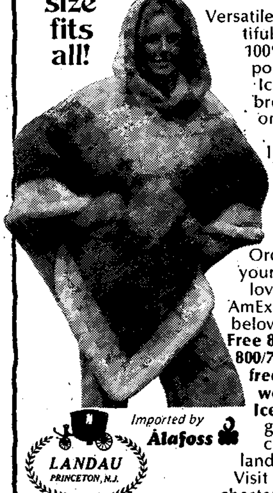

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and the third time he has beaten Alydar—he had done so previously in the Hopeful and the Youthful Stakes. He is the leading money-winner among the two-year-olds, his share of the purse in the Futurity—$63,570—bringing his earnings to $231,707.

FARTHER AFIELD: As had been expected, Calumet Farm's Our Mims won the Delaware Handicap at Delaware Park, the meeting's big race for fillies and mares, at a mile and a quarter. Last of the five starters for three-quarters of the route, she came up fast in the stretch to beat Mississippi Mud by a nose. Javamine was an easy winner of the Arlington Matron Stakes in Chicago; My Juliet beat the boys in the Michigan Mile in Detroit; Hickory Tree Stable's Bemo, who led most of the way, won the United Nations Handicap at the close of the Atlantic City meeting on Labor Day; and I was delighted to hear that old Ancient Title beat a big field of younger runners by five lengths in the Del Mar Handicap at San Diego.

ENGLAND's top horse, The Minstrel, is out of the Washington, D.C., International at Laurel November 5th. He has been retired to stud. E. P. Taylor, who bred him in Canada—he's a son of Northern Dancer and Fleur—and sold him as a yearling to Robert Sangster (the British football-pool tycoon, for whom the colt won the Epsom Derby and the Irish Derby), bought a half interest in him for four and a half million dollars last week. After the sale, The Minstrel was flown to this country, and right now he is at Mr. Taylor's Windfields Farm, in Chesapeake City, Maryland.

—AUDAX MINOR

•

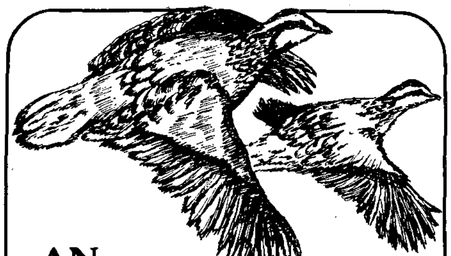
This is the time of year if anybody quotes Joyce Kilmer's poem "Trees," I just shake my head and say, "That poetess hasn't had a rake in her hands and tried to keep ahead of having her total lawn iced with a thick carpet of leaves." *—Alice Wessels Burlingame in the Birmingham (Mich.) Eccentric.*

Still, it's a pretty picture, Joyce with a rake in her hands.

•

Mr. Walker said an independent telephone sampling of voters nine months ago put him far ahead of Mr. Ferris and Mr. Eberhard among those who thought he would be a very good MPP. He also narrowly topped the poll of those who thought he would not be very good. *—Toronto Globe & Mail.*

So there it is, folks.



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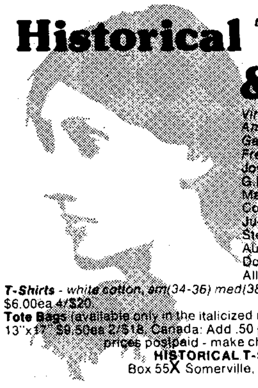

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BOOKS

From Quarks to the Cosmos

THE sine qua non for a writer of popular science is that he know what he's talking about, because obviously he must get the facts right. But that is not the only requirement. Nearly any conscientious popular-science writer who is willing to work at it can get the facts more or less straight, but unless he can also manipulate the ideas in his mind the writing almost inevitably has a superficial character. Does this mean that only scientists can write first-rate popular science? Possibly. Certainly it is hard to find examples of really outstanding popular-science books written by non-scientists. "Hilbert," by Constance Reid (Springer-Verlag), is one, but in this biographical study of David Hilbert, who was one of the great mathematicians of the century, Mrs. Reid, who is not a mathematician, has focussed on his fascinating life, and has left most of the difficult technical material to an appendix, written by Hermann Weyl, who was also one of the great mathematicians of the century. In any case, books of the excellence of Mrs. Reid's are few.

Why is it that there is not more good popular-science writing? One explanation often given is that scientists can't write. Yet some scientists—Erwin Schrödinger, Arthur Stanley Eddington, and Lewis Thomas, for example—write superbly. Many more who could write excellent popular books have not found it worth their while to do so. Productive scientists are usually very busy at their work, and on the scale of their priorities the writing of popular science does not often rank high. As far as I can see, the biologists have done the best job of explaining themselves to the lay public—above all, the post-DNA modern biologists. The astronomers are next; then, rather far behind, come the physicists. Last are the mathematicians. To my knowledge, only one popular book has been written about Gödel's theorem—the extraordinary discovery by Kurt Gödel in 1931 that a formal proof of the absolute consistency of mathematics is impossible. That book, "Gödel's Proof," written in 1958 by Ernest Nagel and James R. Newman (New York University Press), is an excellent brief introduction to the subject. But it seems to me remarkable that mathematicians in the forty-six years since Gödel made his discovery have not tried to present it more fully to the interested non-mathematician.

Overall, the prewar scientists seem to have done better than their successors have at explaining, or trying to explain, their work to non-scientists. Almost every one of the great creative prewar physicists wrote books and articles for the general reader about what he was doing. One thinks immediately of Niels Bohr, Max Born, James Jeans, Werner Heisenberg, Schrödinger, Einstein, and, a little later, George Gamow. These books nurtured the imaginations of the young students of my generation and brought many of us into science. But, curiously, this tradition of popular-science writing seems to have dried up, and we have provided very little to inspire our contemporaries and successors. We have left the field to the non-scientists, with results that we, as scientists, have often, and often unfairly, come to deplore. This development seems all the more unfortunate when one realizes that the contemporary scientist, unlike his prewar colleague, is in debt to his fellow-citizens for financial support. The support from federal sources for pure research in this country now runs into many hundreds of millions of dollars per year. I once estimated that the total cost to each taxpayer of the discovery that there were two types of neutrinos, as opposed to a single type—which was made at Brookhaven National Laboratory, in Long Island, in 1962—was about twenty-five cents, including the cost of constructing the particle accelerator that was used. Without public support, that discovery and most others in contemporary physics could not have been made. We who work in science have a responsibility and an obligation to tell our fellow-citizens how we are getting on, and to share the excitement

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and satisfaction that these discoveries bring to us.

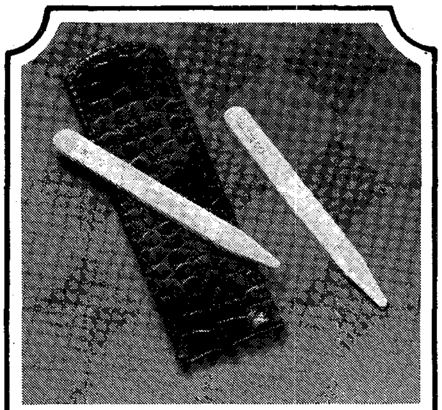
For all these reasons, it is especially gratifying to be able to report on two new popular books about physics and astrophysics which carry on the prewar tradition and take the reader to the outer frontiers of present-day research. The books are "What Is the World Made Of?," by Gerald Feinberg (Anchor/Doubleday), and "The First Three Minutes," by Steven Weinberg (Basic Books). Feinberg and Weinberg were classmates at the Bronx High School of Science. Now in their mid-forties, they are at the height of very active careers in theoretical physics. Feinberg is a professor of physics at Columbia, and Weinberg is a professor of physics at Harvard and a senior scientist at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, in Cambridge. They have done and are doing brilliant work in their fields, and each page of each book has the economy and authority of someone who knows what he is talking about. Here, for example, is Weinberg commenting on the discovery that the universe is expanding, which Edwin Hubble made in 1929 by examining the red-shifted light of distant galaxies:

> Actually, a look at Hubble's data leaves me perplexed how he could reach such a conclusion—galactic velocities [which are what Hubble was measuring by the red shift] seem almost uncorrelated with their distance, with only a mild tendency for velocity to increase with distance. In fact, we would not *expect* any neat relation of proportionality between velocity and distance for these 18 galaxies—they are all much too close, none being farther than the Virgo cluster. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that . . . Hubble knew the answer he wanted to get.

Only a scientist accustomed to looking at experimental data, which are often very confusing, would have been able to appreciate the fact that a theoretical intuition enabled Hubble to conclude from his own incomplete data that the universe was expanding—something that has been confirmed in subsequent and more refined studies of even more distant galaxies.

And here is Feinberg describing the breeding of plutonium by the absorption by uranium of neutrons:

> A practical application of this process is the breeder reactor, now being considered as a source of electrical energy. Plutonium is now produced in amounts of many tons per year in ordinary reactors, and is stored for eventual use. The value of the energy that can be extracted from an ounce of plutonium is approximately $150, or about the value of an ounce of gold. Therefore, the large scale transmutation of uranium-238 into plu-



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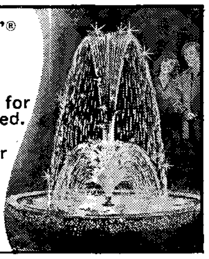

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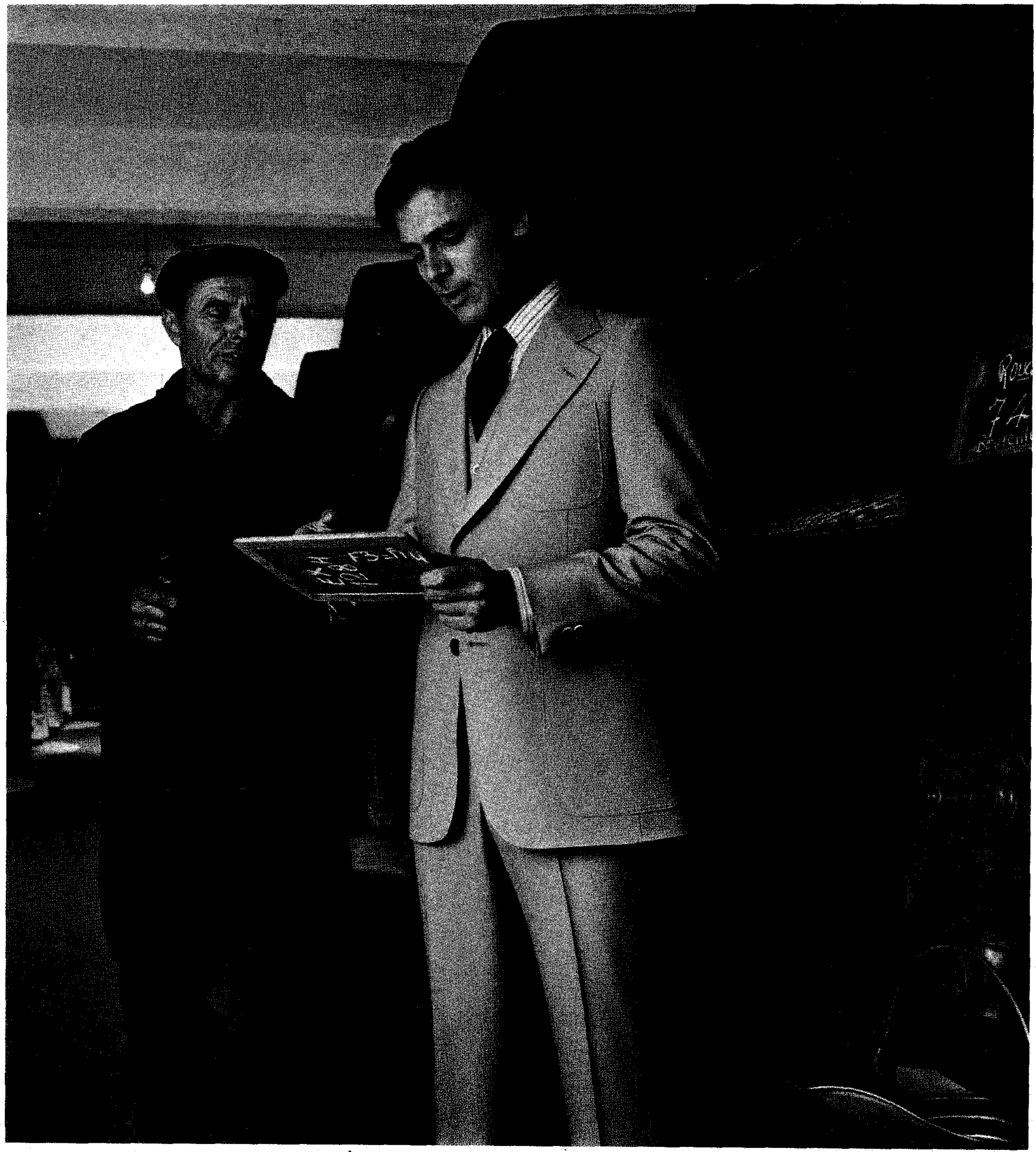

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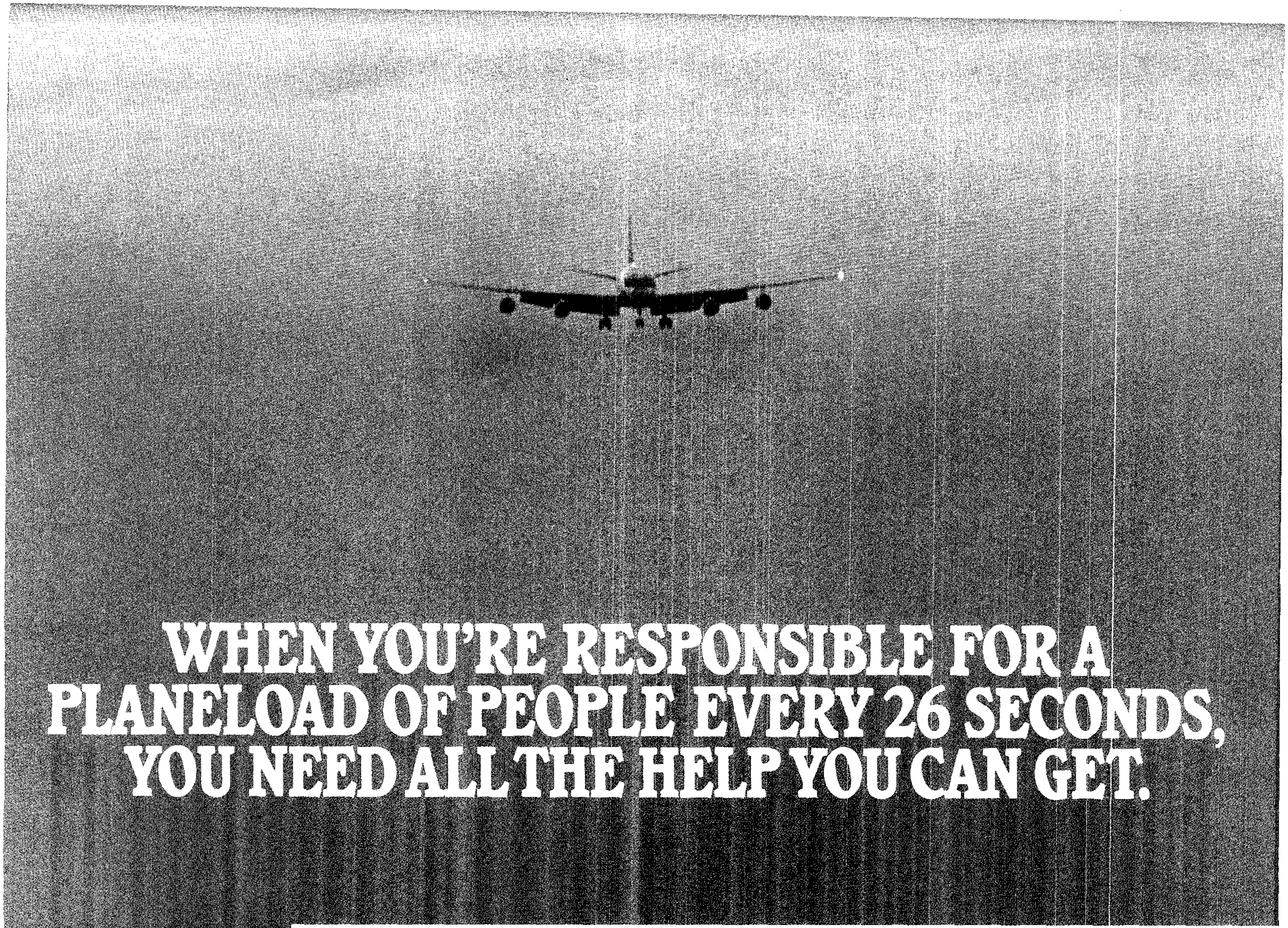
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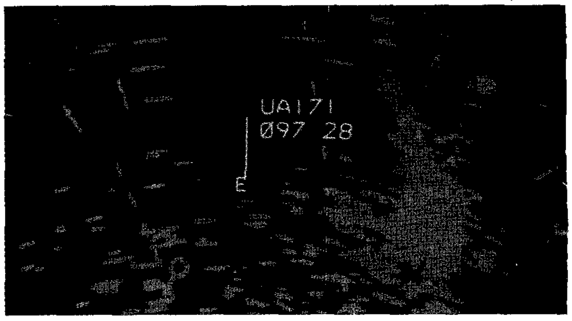

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tonium is a realization of the alchemist's dream, at least in monetary equivalent.

The fact that plutonium can produce an energy equivalent of a hundred and fifty dollars per ounce—something that I had not realized, and that Feinberg no doubt figured out on a pocket calculator—is an example of the sort of insight that makes both of these books a pleasure to read.

Weinberg's book is concerned with the processes that took place during most of the three and three-quarter minutes after the universe as it is now constituted was created. According to the theory that Weinberg is describing, this is the time by which about ninety-eight per cent of the present chemical composition of the universe—its helium and hydrogen—was fixed. The heavier nuclei that make up most of the remaining two per cent were formed later. (The title "The First Three Minutes," Weinberg remarks, "sounded better than 'The First Three and Three-quarter Minutes.' ") In the last ten years or so, scientists have come to realize not only that such speculation about the early universe is subject to experimental testing but that the tests that have been performed confirm, convincingly, the idea that the universe began with a cosmic explosion some ten billion to twenty billion years ago. (To be fair, it should be pointed out that George Gamow and his collaborators, Ralph Alpher and Robert Herman, were entertaining such ideas as early as 1948, and that many of the ideas on the underlying cosmology go back to Einstein and his successors, some decades earlier. But the modern work began in the middle nineteen-sixties.) In fact, Weinberg builds such a convincing case on the basis of the experimental evidence that one comes away from his book feeling not only that the idea of an original cosmic explosion is not crazy but that any other theory appears scientifically irrational.

Part of Weinberg's method is historical. By talking with those who conducted the experiments, he has managed to present a fascinating slice of the history of recent physics and astrophysics. In 1964, two radio astronomers, Arno A. Penzias and Robert W. Wilson, using a radio antenna belonging to the Bell Telephone Laboratories in New Jersey, made the unexpected discovery that there was cosmic radio noise entering their system which they could do nothing to get rid of. At about the same time, unknown to Penzias and Wilson, P. J. E. Peebles, a young theorist at Princeton, pointed out that if the explosive formation of the universe was a tenable idea there

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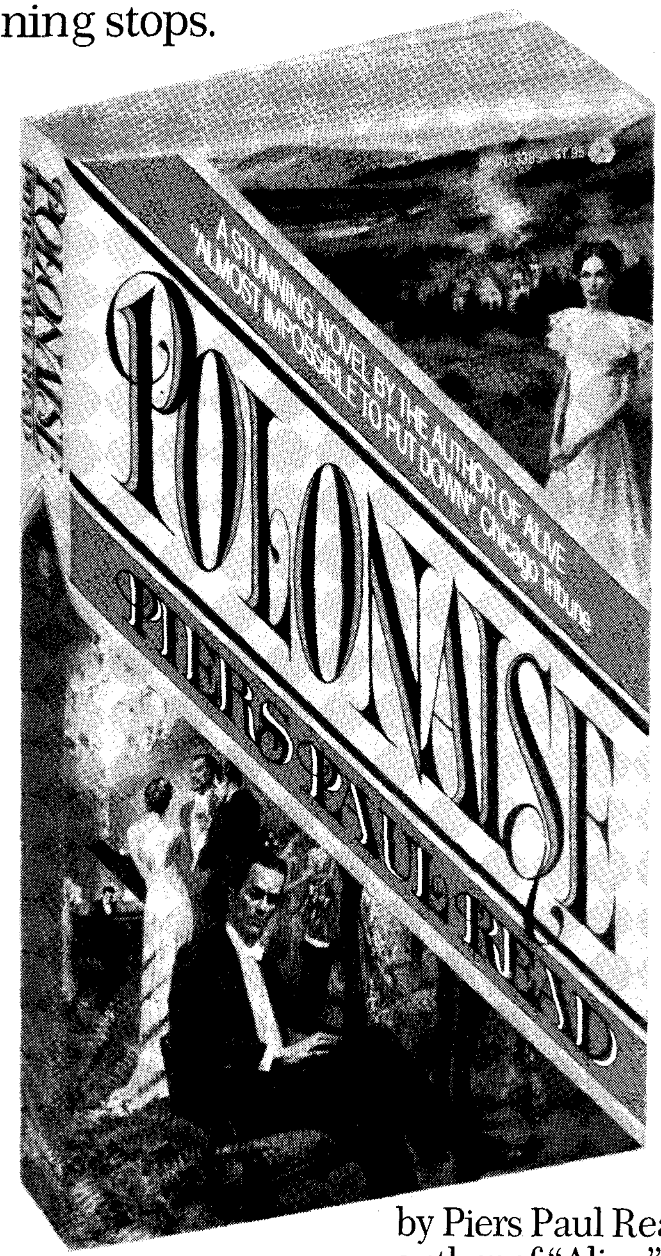
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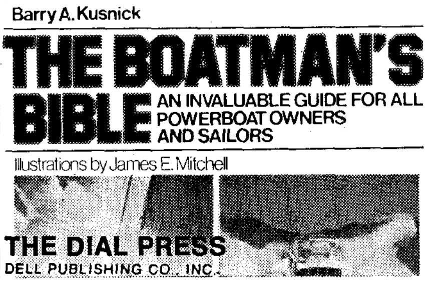
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must have been an intense background of electromagnetic radiation after the explosion. As the universe expanded and cooled, this radiation would have survived, but with longer and longer wavelengths (it would have shifted in the direction of the red), Peebles said, and it should be detectable with a radiotelescope as cosmic noise. This noise was just what Penzias and Wilson had discovered. Such "fossil radiation," as Weinberg terms it, now corresponds to a radiation temperature of some three degrees Kelvin. (On the Kelvin scale, the melting point of ice, which is thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit, is 273.16 degrees, so three degrees is very cold indeed.) This phenomenon has led astrophysicists to take the idea of a cosmic explosion seriously, and what Weinberg has done is to reconstruct for the general reader the events of the minutes that followed the start of that explosion.

IN some ways, for the modern physicist the most interesting time interval is the first one-hundredth of a second. At that instant, the temperature of the universe was so high that there was enough energy available to create almost every one of the sorts of bizarre particles that physicists have been experimenting on recently by using enormously complicated and costly accelerators. Learning about these objects is not only fascinating in its own right but crucial if we are to understand our cosmological origins. The ultimate structure of matter is the main subject of Gerald Feinberg's "What Is the World Made Of?" Feinberg—wisely, I think—has avoided the historical method. If he had tried to give a detailed history of modern physics, it would have taken several books and distracted from the complex story he is trying to tell. He does give a clear picture of how physics is now practiced on the large machines, and of what a modern physics experiment is like. One experiment, he tell us, "was carried out at the CERN laboratory in Geneva, Switzerland. It is typical of many contemporary high-energy physics experiments in that some fifty-five physicists, from at least seven countries, signed the article announcing the result of the experiment. Many more technicians were probably involved as well." This is Big Science par excellence.

Feinberg describes with great lucidity most of the important ideas of modern physics, from the theory of relativity to the invention of quarks. (Both he and Weinberg do their jobs with virtually no mathematical formulas. Such

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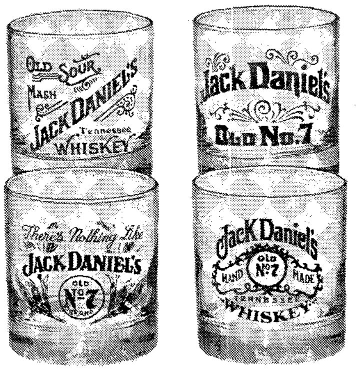

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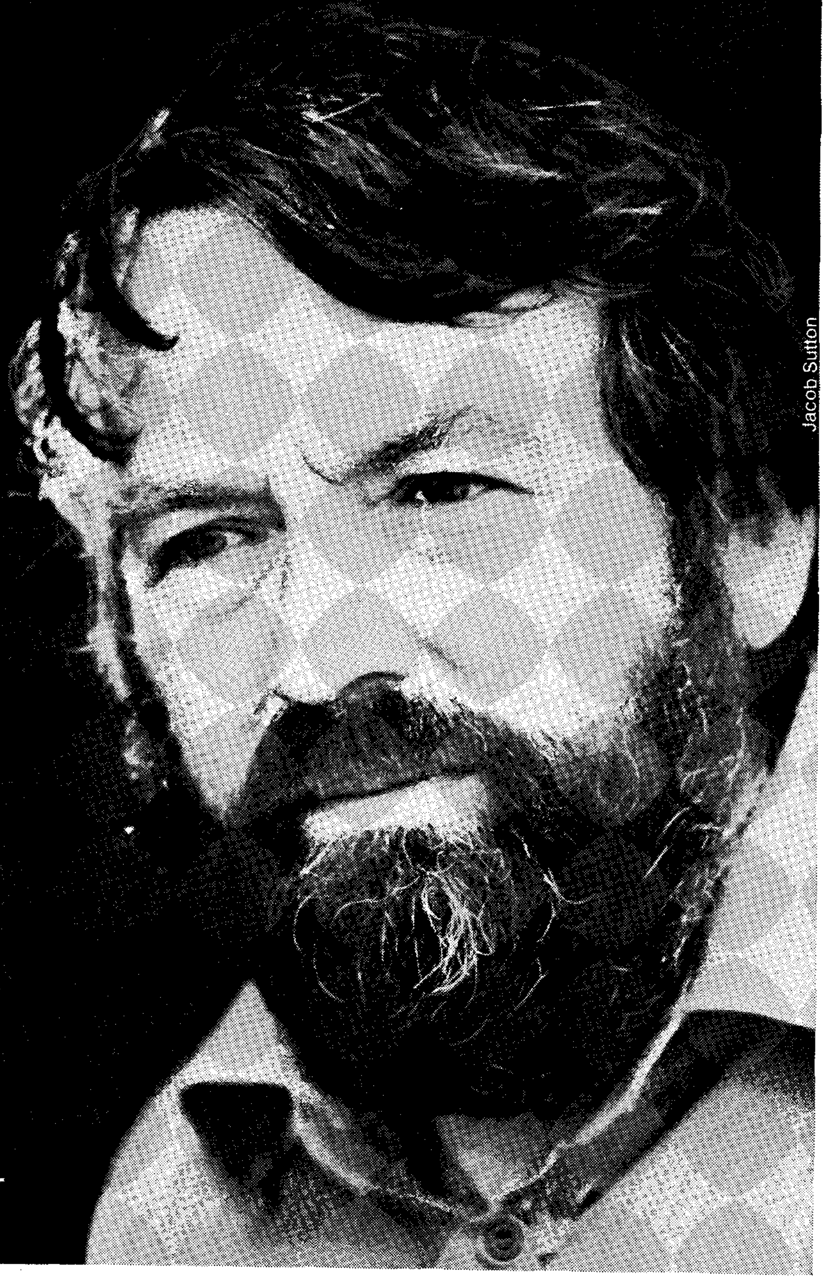

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writing is a tour de force and requires an absolute mastery of subject matter.) From Feinberg's book the reader can learn how a laser works, what an antiparticle is, what Heisenberg's uncertainty principle means, how nuclear fusion works, and on and on. A reader who studies "What Is the World Made Of?" will come away with a real feeling for its subject and will have a clear idea of both what is known and what is not yet known. He will also, I think, come away with a sense of kinship with the men and women who are making science their life's work—a feeling that may inspire some younger readers to come and join us.

These books are not easy to read. (How could they be?) The reader must stop every few paragraphs, catch his or her mental breath, think things over, perhaps read some sentences several times, and then carry on. It is a kind of reading that requires an effort that not many readers are used to making, but it's worth it, because the intellectual satisfaction is so great. Many years ago, my first great teacher in physics, Philipp Frank—who succeeded Einstein at the University of Prague when Einstein left for Berlin, and who was a master of popular-science writing—told me his criterion for a really good book in popular science. It must teach things not only to the layman and to scientists working in different fields, he said, but also to scientists working in the same field. As I read "What Is the World Made Of?" and "The First Three Minutes," I thought of Professor Frank, because I was learning new things and finding familiar things put in new and interesting ways. I think he would have enjoyed both of these books enormously.

—JEREMY BERNSTEIN

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

THE DRAGON, by Alfred Coppel (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $10). An up-to-the-brink-of-thermonuclear-war extravaganza that is as richly melodramatic in word ("'Don't play the fool with me, Lyudin,' Leonov said") as in deed. The time is the late nineteen-eighties. The Chinese have developed a deadly laser weapon called the Dragon. A monomaniacal Russian air marshal plans to tempt the Chinese into an aggressive Dragon action in order to justify an overwhelming counterattack. What's worse, he plans his coup to coincide with a visit to Moscow by the President of

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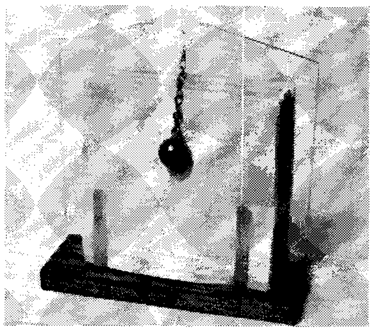

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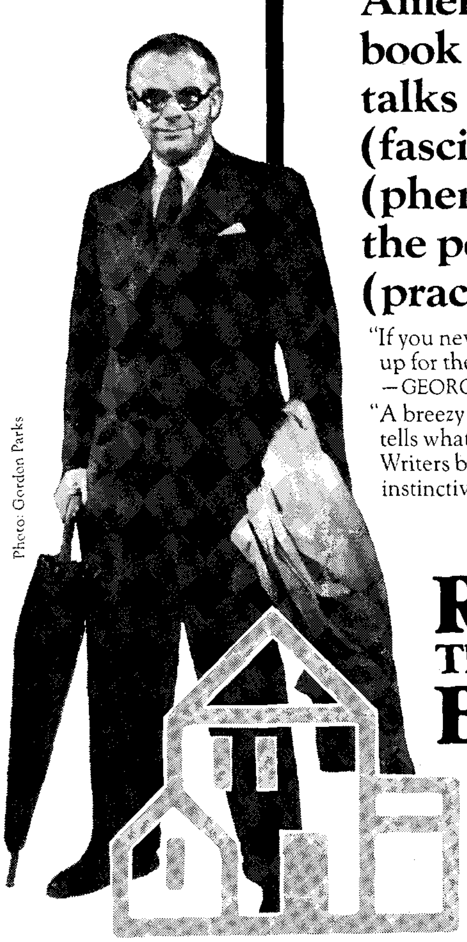
the United States and thus to involve America in the war on the Soviet side. This is a lively, high-tension story, with a cast of thousands, but Mr. Coppel is clearly interested in something more than mere entertainment. He is offering us a glimpse of a future that he apparently quite firmly believes to be implicit in the present trend of American affairs. His hero, a hard-nosed Air Force colonel and a vigorous hawk, is committed to a powerful American military establishment, a deeply secret C.I.A., a responsible (i.e., more or less muzzled) press, an end to permissive liberalism. His truly villainous villains are an opportunistic senator and a nothing-sacred newspaper columnist in whose (not unfamiliar) view the United States "is always automatically guilty if it can't be proved innocent." The United States that we see through Mr. Coppel's horrified eyes is a nation transformed by the reaction to Watergate into a "hamstrung giant."

NOTE: William Maxwell's "Over by the River," a collection of short stories, many of which originally appeared in *The New Yorker*, has been published by Knopf ($8.95).

GENERAL

CLARE SHERIDAN, by Anita Leslie (Doubleday; $10). Clare Sheridan was born in 1885, the daughter of the oldest of the three American Jerome sisters and the hapless Moreton Frewen, known for his harebrained moneymaking schemes as Mortal Ruin. She grew up in England with her Churchill cousins (Winston was her favorite, and she his, all their lives), came out in Edwardian society, and married into the landed aristocracy; like many of her generation of upper-class young matrons, she was widowed in the 1914-18 war. After that, she kicked over the traces: she became a self-taught portrait sculptor and a leading light in London's bohemia; on a whim, she went off to Soviet Russia in the days of the civil war, did busts of Lenin, Trotsky, and other big Bolsheviks, and created a scandal when she brought their plaster heads back to Mayfair. She became a roving journalist, and a maker of news on her own. In California, she went camping in the wilds with an infatuated Charlie Chaplin; in Italy, where she went to interview and sculpt Mussolini, her Titianesque beauty so inflamed Il Duce that he tried to



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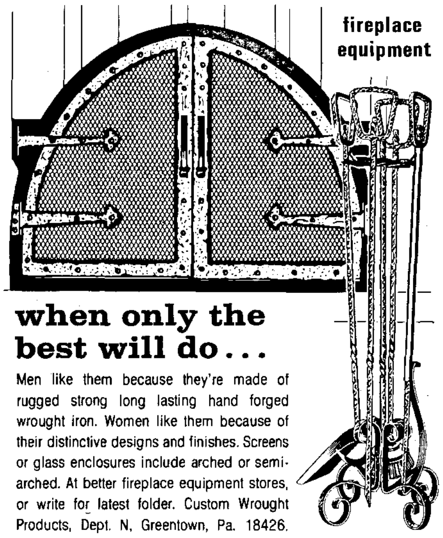

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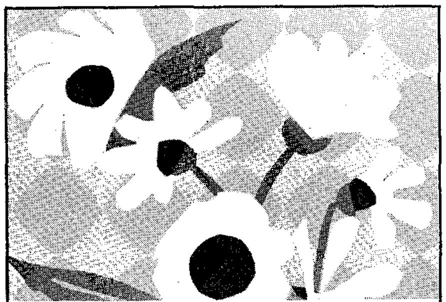

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rape her. She died in 1970. The author's father was Clare Sheridan's cousin, and much of this biography is the result of her long, close relationship with the older woman.

ENEMIES OF SOCIETY, by Paul Johnson (Atheneum; $9.95). The author, a former editor of the *New Statesman*, is a talented expository writer who can tackle all sorts of complicated subjects without cant or obscurity. His own prose sets a standard of lucidity that many of his targets (Teilhard de Chardin, say, or Marcuse) cannot meet. The obfuscation of language, however, is only one of Mr. Johnson's anxieties. He is also concerned by the encroachment of superstition and pseudoscience; by assaults upon the middle class and middle-class values; by the tolerance of violence in Western societies; by the decline in the content of formal education while students increase in number. Mr. Johnson is immensely entertaining, but the reader may not share his sense of urgency—his feeling that Western culture may be doomed by these trends.

THE OSWALD FILE, by Michael Eddowes (Potter; $10). Mr. Eddowes, an English lawyer, has spent some fourteen years examining all the available evidence pertaining to the assassination of John F. Kennedy in Dallas on November 22, 1963, and this book is an account of that study and the conclusions to which it led him. His conclusions, to put it lightly, are disturbing. It is his belief that the Lee Harvey Oswald arrested in Dallas was actually a Soviet assassin assigned by Premier Khrushchev to kill the American President in retaliation for his stand against Russian aggression in Berlin and in Cuba. Mr. Eddowes further believes that the United States quickly learned (perhaps by Russian design) the truth of the matter, and chose to suppress it, in order to avoid a confrontation with the Soviet Union that would almost certainly have led to war. Mr. Eddowes is an impressive analyst and a persuasive writer, but his understanding of that sad and restive case remains, of course, a hypothesis. Photographs, maps, and an appendix of pertinent reports, files, and other documents.

MAN IN ASPIC, by Constantine FitzGibbon (Norton; $8.95). A farrago of reminiscences, sketches, opinions, and fragments that, taken together, offer glimpses of Mr. Fitz-

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Gibbon's mind and the life he has lived since the Second World War. Some of the pieces, including explanations of the author's marital ups and downs, are such that they could be offered for publication only by someone who thought that everything that happened to him was interesting. Some pieces are marred by jabs of cultural or political reaction ("the ice-age of Tynan's theatre, the stale, cold blasts of Brecht, the praise poured by Philip Toynbee and others on such tedious novels as 'Catch-22' and 'The Tin Drum'"). And some, including a few firsthand political observations and satirical fantasies, offer promise of more substantial books that could have been written if the author had concentrated his talents.

SIR AUREL STEIN: ARCHEOLOGICAL EXPLORER, by Jeannette Mirsky (Chicago; $17.50). The subject of this biography (1862-1943) was born in Budapest and died in Afghanistan. His gift for languages and his fascination with Alexander the Great induced him to follow the steps of his hero to India, where he hoped to find traces of Hellenistic civilization. There Stein (he took British citizenship in 1904) found more to do in more places than he had imagined possible. His expeditions in India and Central Asia brought back information in such fields as history and art history, philology and decipherment, comparative religion, archeology, and geography. He travelled the mountains and deserts of the inhospitable reaches of Chinese Turkestan and Baluchistan, finding site after site that revealed the mixings, crossings, and migrations of cultures and peoples. By present standards, Stein and his contemporaries appear high-handed in assuming that every portable find would be better off in a Western museum. Yet it was partly because Stein and his fellows taught Asians to appreciate the glories of their pasts that the Asian nations no longer permit the abstraction of their treasures.

NOTE: "Stuttering: The Disorder of Many Theories," by Gerald Jonas, has been published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux ($7.95). All the material first appeared in *The New Yorker*.

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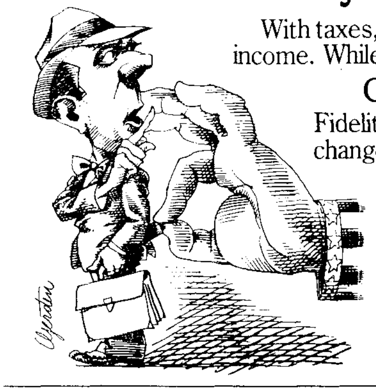

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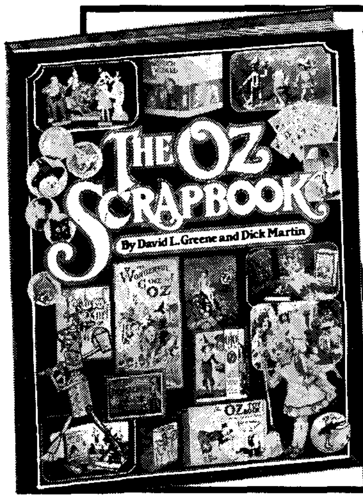

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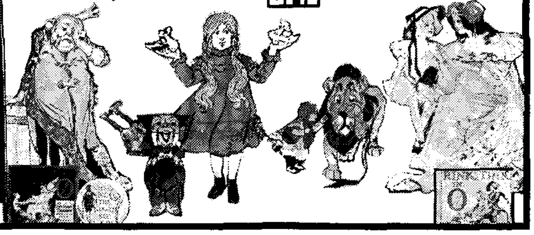

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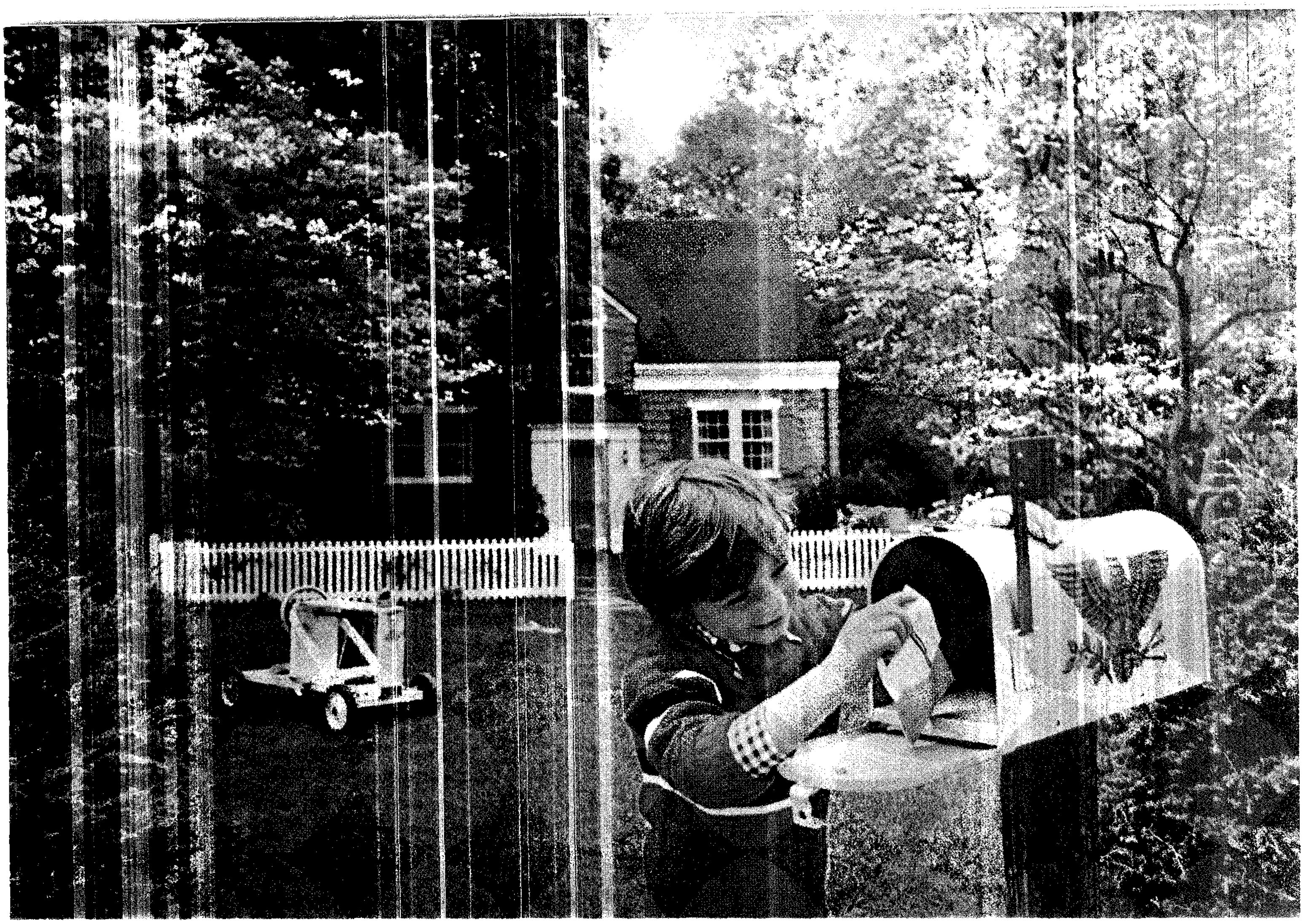

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